



## MINUTES OF TRUST BOARD MEETING

Date: Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2023  
 Time: 10.00am  
 Venue: Laurus Trust- Boardroom

Clerk: N Burgess  
 Present: G Turnpenney, T Little, M Vevers, L Magrath, J Crombleholme, C Nevin, D Woolley, SMcgill, W Mason, L Woolley, and R Kumar (via Teams)

	Action	Initials
1	Trustees are asked to complete their Related Party Questionnaire ahead of the external audit	All
1	Update on membership of the Trust Board at the next meeting	TL
1	Expressions of interest in the vacancy of Link Trustee for PSHE should be made via the Chair	All
1	Completed Link Visit proformas to be sent to the Clerk	All
2	To update on the due diligence on the school who have expressed an interest in joining the Trust	LW, LW and WM
3	Trustees are asked to request further finance training if they feel this would be beneficial	All
3	To send a document regarding Electric Vehicle salary sacrifice scheme to WM	SM
3	Trust descriptors to be an agenda item at the next meeting	TL

### Agenda – Part 1

Category	Item	Notes	Action	
1	Governance Arrangements	Apologies	Apologies were accepted and received from A Gilmour, D Kershaw and D Brown.	
		AOB items	There were no other items of business which were not included in the agenda for this meeting.	
		Start of the year information	Trustees received the updated start of the year information including the Code of Conduct and Annual Declaration.  Trustees were reminded by the CFO to complete the Related Party Questionnaire, which forms part of the external audit, by the end of the month	All
		Minutes of the last Trust Board	Minutes of the meeting held 5 <sup>th</sup> July 2023 were <u>approved</u> as a correct record of the meeting and all	

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	Meeting	actions were completed.	
	Compliance	<p>Trustees <u>approved</u> the updated Scheme of Delegation for 2023-2025.</p> <p>Trustees <u>approved</u> the Trust Board Schedule of Business for 2023-2024. There will now be 5 Trust Board meeting per year, meeting 4 will be the Strategic Planning meeting.</p> <p>Trust Board Committee Schedules of Business for Audit and Risk, Finance and Resources, and Governance Oversight and Standards were <u>approved</u>. Trustees noted that Audit &amp; Risk and Finance &amp; Resources were now separate sub committees. It was also noted that Governance, Oversight and Standards committee meetings would now take place immediately after Trust Board meetings 1, 3 and 5.</p> <p>Trustees <u>approved</u> the updated Terms of Reference for the Pay and Remuneration committee.</p>	
	Membership	<p>Membership of the Trust Board was discussed at length and the skills required from a suitable candidate to be appointed to the remaining vacancy on the Board. It was discussed that there was an expression of interest from a potential candidate and a further update will be given at the next meeting.</p> <p>Governance, Oversight and Standards committee will meet immediately following this meeting and attendance will be discussed, including at Academy committee meetings.</p>	TL
	Trust Board Committee Chair updates	<p>S McGill updated Trustees on the Finance and Resources committee meeting which had taken place 7<sup>th</sup> July 2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee considered the results of the internal scrutiny report and the subsequent recommendations</li> <li>• Management accounts were reviewed</li> <li>• Approval of the 3-year budget forecast</li> <li>• Staffing and recruitment was discussed at length</li> <li>• Teacher pay awards were discussed and the notification of the change in the award following the submission of the finalised budget forecast</li> <li>• HR metrics reports were presented and reviewed</li> <li>• Support staff recruitment was discussed and</li> </ul>	

			<p>the posts which are proving difficult to recruit to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trustees received a presentation from the Trust Director of Marketing and were impressed by the incredible amount of work which is done to influence parents, students and staff</li> </ul> <p><b>Q – Is there capacity in Marketing to be on top of all the updates required, for example updating information on websites and on social media?</b></p> <p>A – Yes the Team are on top of everything, are very active in promoting our social media, and are aware of the importance of the information being up to date.</p> <p>We are currently in the process of running courses for our staff to showcase the schools and the Trust. We have also recruited an Apprentice to the Marketing team. The team have done a significant amount of work on brand guidelines and templates.</p> <p><b>Q – Is there capacity in the HR team to meet all the compliance and strategic aspects?</b></p> <p>A – There are no concerns there is just a significant volume of work for the team. 3 new starters to the team have been recruited since September. GT offered support to the Director of HR to provide external validation of all the excellent work which is taking place.</p>	
		Link Trustee updates	<p>There still exists a vacancy for the Link Trustee for PSHE. Trustees are asked to inform the Chair if they should wish to be considered for this vacancy.</p> <p>Trustees are reminded to send their completed Link Visit proformas to the Clerk for retention.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>All</p>
2	Being strategic	<p>Theme: The three Uns:</p> <p>Unashamedly academic, Unapologetically Aspirational, Uncompromising standards</p>	<p>The indicators of success are shown in bold within the TDP. The plan is updated ongoing following reflective conversations.</p>	

		<p>Priority: Headline Performance</p>	<p>A summary of headline results was circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Primary data shows a huge dip in outcomes nationally as the effects of Covid are still evident. There is no data for Woodford as the school is new. There is also no reportable data for 2020 and 2021.</p> <p>Year 2 pupils at Gorsey Bank and Cheadle Hulme Primary school had achieved good outcomes for the expected standards and greater depth is improving.</p> <p>Year 6 outcomes at Gorsey are comparable to national figures and despite the effects of Covid, and are above national average. It was noted that there was a high level of pupil need within this cohort and this is borne out in the outcomes.</p> <p>Trustees were reminded that in terms of secondary data the results are compared to 2019 data.</p> <p>This year saw the first set of GCSE results for Laurus Cheadle Hulme and Laurus Ryecroft. The results were pleasing and both schools will be pushing for higher in the next year. Better is always possible.</p> <p>CHHS were very proud to report 70% which was their best outcomes ever.</p> <p>HGHS results were discussed. Since joining the Trust the EBacc entry numbers increased from 17% to 56%. Meetings are now taking place with Subject Leaders to plan moving forward. Persistent absence is a significant concern and impacts the outcomes.</p> <p>Priestnall outcomes were discussed for context. From this current year students will start languages in year 7.</p> <p>Year 9 MFL results across the schools were excellent. The national average figures the outcomes are compared to are for year 11 students. All schools exceeded national average for the 9-5 measure.</p> <p>Trustees were reminded that when the Progress 8 figures are published for the 2023 results the figure will not include the language results from year 9 as these were CAG/TAG.</p> <p>In terms of Sixth Form outcomes there was an increase in the number of students achieving 3+A*/A and the average grade was B. Students in this cohort did not</p>
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			<p>have any comparable GCSE results due to CAG/TAG results.</p> <p><b>Q – Is there any data externally which we can review for this cohort to be able to see any variations?</b></p> <p>A – 55% of students went on to study at Russell Group, 605 at Sutton and 3 students to Oxbridge. One student was placed in a special category as they did not drop a single mark. It was noted that there had been a larger uptake of Higher Apprenticeships than in previous years.</p> <p>Attendance is an issue and a worry ongoing. This is a national picture. This will obviously impact on progress data. There has been a shift in the perception of attendance and schools are reporting more persistent absence. There is now a new metric to report severe persistent absence and this will obviously have an effect on student outcomes.</p>	
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		<p>Priority: Accountability and Quality Assurance</p>	<p>The Trust Growth and Sustainability document was circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The Executive Team have worked to streamline the process and make it more accessible by clearly defining Culture, Strategy and Operation. There are individual documents which back up the priorities.</p> <p>The Culture looks at how we operate and the teams clearly defined to enable this.</p> <p>The Strategy is the same in most schools, with a degree of flexibility with regards to the cohort or staffing. The School Improvement model is pertinent when a new school joins the Trust.</p> <p>Capacity is looked at Trust wide and at school level. Professional learning and development is key.</p> <p>The document serves as a reminder to the Executive Team and the individual Heads of School.</p> <p><b>Q – How does the Central Services team fit into this?</b> A – Some of the aspects were delivered to the Central Services Team as part of the September Inset. Capacity is a standing item on the Central Services meeting agendas. The Team are aware of how they fit in and understand and recognise the 3 uns. Central Services teams know that everyone can improve and it is not simply the results which count and that they also contribute to the success of the Trust.</p> <p>Trustees appreciated the clarity of the document and looked forward to seeing how it would be rolled out and embedded.</p>	
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		Exec Team updates	<p><u>Priestnall</u> All is going well at Priestnall. Behaviour has improved and the staff seem to be happy.</p> <p>The issue of keeping snakes in the school was discussed at length, including the associated health risks and the lack of an up to date risk assessment. Currently there are 10 snakes in school. It has been agreed that there will be one snake allowed to be kept in school and the others must be re-homed. If the member of staff should leave the school in the future the snake would be taken as it is their personal pet. The campaign had attracted a significant amount of interest and support on social media channels.</p> <p><b>Q – Will there be an animal in schools policy?</b> A – Yes this is something which we are currently writing and will be implementing.</p> <p><u>Sixth Forms</u> Trustees were updated on the admissions numbers to each of the four Sixth Forms. HGHS reopened in September after a two-year closure, and DHS and LR opened for the first time.</p> <p>Despite admission numbers being slightly lower than anticipated it was acknowledged that all were a good calibre of students. At DHS next year the school will admit students from their own cohort. This current year the Sixth Form is open to external students only.</p> <p>Trustees noted that financially this would be a tough year in terms of numbers but it would be viewed as a period of growth for the future numbers, whilst the new Sixth Forms become established.</p> <p><u>Update on expression of interest to join the Trust.</u> The Trust has been approached by a local primary school with a view to joining the Trust.</p> <p>The Head of School has also asked for SEND support. The team carried out a SEND Audit in the week prior to this meeting and will be providing ½ day a week SENCO support to Christmas, in the first instance.</p> <p>There are also 2 reviews planned to look at curriculum and teaching. Following the half term break there will be some non-educational due diligence completed and the findings will be presented to the sub group of Trustees, before being reported to Trustees at the November board meeting to make a decision as to</p>	
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			<p>whether to progress further.</p> <p>Alongside the due diligence we have also advised the school that they would need to apply for the academy order before any commitment.</p> <p>School numbers were discussed, in that the school is not full, and the ways to market the school to increase admission numbers.</p> <p><u>Update</u> SM, WM and LM had met prior to the meeting to reassure Trustees.</p> <p>Over the summer the legal process of Priestnall joining the Trust had been protracted. Leaders had had to make some decisions and react quickly. Decisions were made and documented to commit funds of over £1m. The Trust have been allocated £3m grant funding. A comfort letter has been received from Stockport LA and the Trust are about to submit their first claim.</p> <p>The Sports Centre at Priestnall will transfer across with no capital contribution. All costs will be covered by existing grants, including from LFET.</p> <p>SM confirmed that the comfort letter should have been received by mid August and this was delayed due to holidays. Leaders had also seen the minutes of cabinet meetings where the confirmation of £2m funding was made. SM was confident that nothing had been done to put the Trust at risk and that it was all part of the journey to bring Priestnall into the Trust. Trustees <u>approved</u> the processes retrospectively and thanked Leaders for the reassurance.</p> <p><b>Q – Could this have gone wrong?</b> A – We can trust the excellent relationship LM has with the Director of Education in Stockport.</p> <p><b>Q – Next time what could we do differently? What are our lessons?</b> A – A key aspect of the process will be to ensure that the other parties know we have to have the documents in advance.</p> <p>WM commented that the process can sometimes lack coordination and after months of negotiations somebody can do something which stalls the whole process. Over the summer there were 50 additional schools converting in Stockport.</p>	LM/LW /WM
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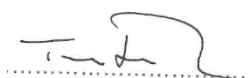
			Trustees offered their thanks to WM for the work and perseverance which had gone into the process to ensure Priestnall were able to join the Trust for 1 <sup>st</sup> September.	
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3	Holding to account	Changes to the Academy Trust Handbook	<p>WM detailed the changes to the Academy Trust Handbook, which are effective from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023.</p> <p>The Handbook is in the Teams folder for all Trustees to be aware of.</p> <p>The list of key changes was presented to Trustees and confirmation that all of these changes are in place by the Trust. It is Trustees responsibility to ensure that the changes are implemented by the Trust.</p> <p>In terms of good estates safety and management we currently do not believe we have any RAAC in our schools. D Barker is looking at more intrusive structural surveys being carried out to assist with future planning.</p> <p>Trustees were asked to request further training if they felt this would be useful to increase their financial knowledge.</p> <p>The roles of Accounting Office (LM) and Chief Financial Officer (WM) are held by different individuals.</p> <p>The Trust have a comprehensive meeting structure which is set to ensure matters of compliance can be met. Budget Forecast Return (BFR) now has to be submitted by 31<sup>st</sup> August.</p> <p>Management Accounts are available to all Trustees via the Teams file area and are sent directly to SM and TL on a monthly basis.</p> <p>Electric vehicle salary sacrifice schemes do not need EFSA approval where no liability falls on the Trust if an employee does not fulfil contractual obligations with their scheme provider.</p> <p>Trustees thanked WM for the succinct presentation to confirm the changes to the Academy Trust Handbook.</p> <p><b>Q – Do we have a salary sacrifice scheme for electric vehicles?</b>  A- Not at present as we are not big enough as a Trust. SM agreed to forward a document to WM for reference.</p> <p>LW referenced the Trust Quality Descriptors and themes for the Board. It was agreed to review the descriptors at the next meeting. The onus is on non-</p>	<p>All</p> <p>SM</p> <p>TL</p>
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			Exec Team Trustees and the need to highlight areas which could be strengthened.	
		Admissions	Proposed changes to the Admissions policies for 2025-2026 were circulated prior to the meeting.  Consultation is required for GBPS and HGHS due to the 7-year rule.  Clarification is being sought with regards to the Priestnall Admissions Policy now that the Trust is the admission authority.  Trustees <u>approved</u> to consult on HGHS and GBPS policies and <u>approved</u> all others with no changes.	
		Policies for approval as per the Trust Policy Schedule:	There were no policies for approval at this meeting.	
4	AOB	Meeting dates for Trust Board and all committees	Meeting dates for all Trust Board and Academy Committee meetings were circulated for information.  Trustees were invited to the Hazel Grove Sixth Form open event on 28 <sup>th</sup> September.	
5	Meeting dates:	Meeting dates:	Wednesday 29 <sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 10.00am at CHHS Wednesday 6 <sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 10.00am at Hazel Grove Sixth Form Wednesday 1 <sup>st</sup> May 2024 at 10.00am at Priestnall Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> July 2024 at 10.00am at CHHS	

Impact of Meeting / Key Outcomes	
Trustees received a brief overview of the Finance and Resources committee meeting from July 2023	
Trustees received a presentation on headline performance outcomes at all school in the Trust	
The Trust Growth and Sustainability strategy was received and discussed	
Executive Team updates on Priestnall, Sixth Forms and expressions of interest to join the Trust were received	
Trustees received a presentation from the CFO on the changes to the Academy Trust Handbook	
Trustees considered the Admissions policies for 2025-2026 and approved consultation on HGHS and GBPS	

Meeting closed at 12.15pm



Chair of Trustees  
29.11.2023

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