

MINUTES OF TRUST BOARD MEETING

Date: Wednesday 1st February 2023
Time: 10.00am
Venue: Teams

Clerk: N Burgess
Present: C Nevin, L Magrath, W Mason, G Turnpenney, L Woolley, D Woolley, S McGill, A Gilmour, D Kershaw, J Crombleholme, M Vevers, D Brown and R Kumar

Action		Initials
1	Expressions of interest for the role of Primary Link Trustee are sought	All
2	Trustees are asked to complete a link visit as soon as possible and send their completed ROV to the Clerk	All
3	To keep Trustees updated on the progress of the process of another secondary school joining the Trust	LM/WM

Agenda – Part 1				
Category	Item	Notes	Action	
1	Governance Arrangements	Apologies	Apologies were received from A Little.	
		AOB items	There were no other items of business to raise which were not included in the agenda for this meeting.	
		Register of Business Interests	The Clerk circulated the Register of Business Interests and there were no changes to note.	
		Minutes of the last Trust Board meeting	<p>The minutes of the meeting held 30th November 2022 were approved as a correct record of the meeting:</p> <p><u>Actions</u> All actions from the meeting have now been completed. The Laurus Trust Conference, Governing with Impact, will now be held on 22nd March 2023. The Trust are looking to appoint a specific Primary Link Trustee, this will be a new role. Trustees are asked to let LW or the Clerk know if they would like to volunteer.</p>	All

2	Reporting	Trust websites	Trustees reviewed the Website QA and Action Plan which was circulated prior to the meeting. It was confirmed that all the required changes had been updated on the individual websites.	
		Admissions policies	<p>The Woodford Primary School Admissions Policy and consultations responses were reviewed by Trustees.</p> <p>There are minor changes to the policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion of eligibility of children of staff who have 2 years service within the Trust • Wording of the statutory code updated <p>Trustees <u>approved</u> the Woodford Primary School Admissions Policy 2024-2025.</p> <p>Q – In terms of Gorsey Bank Primary School where do the children go for their secondary education? In terms of admissions do we need to reflect in our growth strategy that their Laurus education does not continue?</p> <p>A – Some of the pupils move to the private sector and some to Wilmslow High School. It would be preferable if there was the opportunity to feed into a Laurus secondary school, but this will also be the case with Woodford and Crown Street.</p>	

		Trust Board committee Chair updates	<p><u>Audit Finance and Resources</u> S McGill gave Trustees a brief overview of the meeting which had taken place 9th December 2022.</p> <p>The External Audit Report had been received and reviewed. The report was unique in that there were no recommendations, which was an excellent result. Thanks were offered to WM and the team for an excellent outcome.</p> <p>The Annual Accounts to 31st August 2022 were approved.</p> <p>Trustees received Management Accounts to 31st October 2022.</p> <p>Trustees approved the changes to the Trust Finance Manual, following the publication of the Academy Trust Handbook.</p> <p>Trustees approved changes to the Scheme of Delegation</p> <p>Trustees reviewed the Internal Audit summary for 2021-2022 and one recommendation.</p> <p>The internal scrutiny review schedule for 2022-2023 was discussed.</p> <p>A tender process is taking place for the External Audit. This contract must be reviewed every 5 years, as directed in the Academy Trust Handbook.</p> <p>Trustees received an update on Capital Projects which had taken place over the summer.</p> <p>M Stewart attended to present the IT Development Plan to Trustees.</p> <p>Trustees received the annual Data Compliance Report.</p> <p>It was noted that the management accounts presented at the meeting did not include the impact of the Autumn statement. There will be some schools with a small in year deficit. The coming year will still be a challenge and there is always the unknown of any pay awards which will be implemented.</p> <p><u>AGM</u> The AGM took place 12th December 2022.</p> <p>L Members received the Final Accounts to 31st August 2022.</p> <p>Received an update on Trust growth.</p> <p>Members confirmed they felt they received adequate information throughout the year, including the Trust Board report to Academy Committees.</p>	
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		Link Trustee updates	As discussed earlier in the meeting a Primary Link Trustee is being sought. Trustees are asked to complete a link visit as soon as possible and send their completed proforma to the Clerk.	All
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3	Being strategic	<p>Theme: Unashamedly Academic</p> <p>Priority: Curriculum Development</p> <p>Priority: Accountability and Quality Assurance</p>	<p>The Trust Development Plan was circulated prior to the meeting. The plan includes the indicators of success and there are no material changes. The plan is ambitious and is a good reference point for Trustees.</p> <p>The Trust Quality Assurance document gives Trustees a flavour of all the work that is done across the Trust. There is currently not a lot of external validation done and this will be progressed further as time allows. Some work has been done with United Learning but there is still work to be done.</p> <p>Internal QA takes place within the Trust all the time. CEO visits all schools regularly for QA visits. Meetings are also held at the different schools to encourage informal QA.</p> <p>Trust Director visits to schools are invaluable. Visits are ongoing throughout the year and give a chance to show what is being done, see any emerging practice and share good practice. Trust Directors are able to see what works in their area and align across the Trust.</p> <p>The Praxis Clarity document is a crucial document for Trustees to be able to see the link between the schools and to form a basis for the Link Trustee visit.</p> <p>Trustees felt having read the example QA visit reports there was an opportunity to be able to see the issues in the different schools but that all had the same driving force and were all developing all the time to align across the Trust.</p> <p>DB commented that as both a Trustee and a Head of School the visits and reports were a very important piece of work. They provide reassurance of what is happening in schools.</p> <p>JC commented that as a Trustee it was reassuring to see the QA process as the Trust grows and the importance of formalising the process. It was possible to see in action the detail of the report and JC felt incredibly assured and proud.</p> <p><u>EHP visit to GBPS</u> An example outcome report was circulated to Trustees for their information. EHP visits each primary school weekly, and makes a formal visit with a follow up report once a term. The 1st visit has a pupil focus, the 2nd visit is to review in year data and the 3rd visit looks at resources, human and physical.</p>	
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			<p>Ofsted focus reviews also take place in each school. There are new AHTs appointed at CHPS and Gorsey with the specific responsibility to engage with the handbook, and to understand the systems and processes. The reviews are done half termly and the actions allow the school to move forward.</p> <p>Q – Is the EHP visit report shared with Academy Committees? A – Yes they are.</p>	
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		Trust Growth	<p>CEO updated Trustees on expressions of interest received to date.</p> <p>There has been an approach from a secondary school in Tameside. An initial interest has been registered but the current Headteacher is retiring.</p> <p>There has been interest from 3 individual primary schools. Meetings have taken place and the schools have visited one of the Trust primary schools.</p> <p>In terms of the secondary school who have voted to join Laurus Trust. due diligence is taking place and a working group of Trustees have met twice to review.</p> <p>GT feedback on behalf of the working group. It was evident that there had been a significant amount of work done in the due diligence process. Trustees felt that the school would be a good fit and there has been overwhelming support from parents. The biggest risk identified was the building. There are currently a number of issues which pose a health and safety risk and which would take a considerable amount of funding to rectify.</p> <p>DK commented that there was support across the board for the school being a good cultural fit within the Trust, but that there was a big financial gap to bridge to get the building into a good and safe condition.</p> <p>LM and WM had met with Stockport LA the day prior to this meeting. It had been noted that the school was not top of the list for funding within the LA. During the meeting the use of the word safe, in terms of the building, was queried. It was agreed that LM and WM would continue to keep talking to maintain the lines of communication with Stockport LA. The next step is for the Trust Estates Director and the LA Director to meet and see exactly the issues with the site. A new site survey will be completed to ascertain exactly which works are health and safety issues and will need completing immediately. WM would like to seek the protection of an indemnity from Stockport, irrespective of which stage the negotiations are at. The reputational and financial risks were discussed, should the school have to close for any length of time due to issues with the building. It was concluded that it had been a good conversation with the LA and it was unanimous to wish to find a way forward.</p>	
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			<p>Q – What is the timeline for decision making for this school to join the Trust?</p> <p>A – Trustees would need to agree, in principle, to the school joining the Trust, subject to negotiations. There is currently a consultation running with parents and staff. There is a legal process to follow and as a Trust we are able to withdraw at any time before signing. Trustees delegated power to the working group to continue the negotiations and report back to the full Trust Board as necessary.</p> <p>JC commented that as a Trustee there were 2 concerns. The first is the impact on other schools in the Trust this school joining would have, and would seek reassurance with regards this. The second is the safety of the building and the risks this poses.</p> <p>The reputational and financial risk of the school having to close due to the building is a big risk. One risk identified is the heating system, which was highlighted as a problem 2 years ago and to date nothing has been done. The cost estimated is £1.5m.</p> <p>In terms of the school joining the Trust, overall, everyone involved in the process is excited by the possibility and of the differences which can be made.</p> <p>Once the site visits have taken place at the school an action plan will be done of the works which need completing urgently, and those classed as non-urgent. In the meantime, negotiations with the LA will continue around funding for the building works.</p> <p>It was agreed the school joining the Trust would be a good opportunity and that there was still a need to proceed with caution. WM and LM agreed to keep Trustees informed of the process ongoing.</p> <p>Q – Which Trustees make up the working group?</p> <p>A – DK, SM and GT.</p> <p>Q – Do we have the capacity to take on another school?</p> <p>A – Yes we do. It has been four years now since HGHS joined the Trust and we feel the time is right. HGHS has since had a good Ofsted outcome. In terms of the capacity, we have people in place to step up due to our succession planning.</p> <p>Trustees were reassured of the robust process which has already taken place and are happy to approve for</p>	LM/WM
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			the continuing conversations to take place, and to keep Trustees informed before any final decisions take place.	
		Executive Team Growth	<p>Planning is taking place constantly for capacity building. A revised structure is necessary as the Trust grows to enable school improvement to happen.</p> <p>The document circulated showed from September 2023 the addition of a Director of Education to the structure and also an additional Executive Headteacher Secondary, with 2 Associate Headteachers being appointed to backfill.</p> <p>From September 2024 the structure would then be maintained to see how the Trust grows.</p> <p>From September 2025 the Trust would need to appoint a CEO and 2 Deputy CEO, dependent on the growth of the trust, particularly in primary.</p> <p>Q – Trustees would need assurance that you would work closely with HR in advertising all vacancies? A – Yes there would be a clear and transparent process for all vacancies.</p> <p>Trustees <u>approved</u> the structure for 2023 and would review the growth strategy ongoing for further changes to the structure.</p>	
4		PM of CEO	The PM review of the CEO will be taking place immediately after this meeting.	
	Holding to account	Compliance with statutory requirements	<p>The following confirmations were confirmed verbally:</p> <p>Trust approach to Curriculum and Assessment – confirmed by MV and LW</p> <p>SEND Code of Practice – confirmed by MV and LW</p> <p>EYFS Provision – confirmed by LW</p> <p>Careers Guidance – confirmed by MV</p> <p>Approach for directing pupils offsite and exclusions – confirmed by MV</p>	

		Approve policies as per the Trust Policy Schedule	<p>There were no policies for approval at this meeting.</p> <p>Trustees discussed the policy review arrangements. There were 4 options for Trustees to consider moving forward:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To continue as present with 3 Trustees reviewing all policies 2. Policies allocated on an ad-hoc basis, where possible linked to a Trustees specialist field 3. 3 Trustees appointed at the start of each year and this is changed annually 4. At the start of the academic year each Trustee be allocated an equal number of policies for review. <p>A long discussion took place and it was agreed that option 3 would be the most suitable option for Trustees. This would be effective from September 2023.</p>	
5	AOB		<p>The next meeting of the Trust Board will be followed by the Conference for Trustees and Governors across the Trust. The meeting will be 9.00 – 11.00 and the Conference will be 11.15 – 1.15.</p> <p>LM asked for Trustee availability ongoing. There may be the need to convene emergency one item agenda meetings, via Teams, in terms of the school joining the Trust. These meetings will be arranged as the need arises.</p>	
	Meeting Dates:	Meeting dates to note:	<p>TBM4 Wednesday 22.03.2023 at 10.00am TBM5 Wednesday 03.05.2023 at 10.00am TBM6 Wednesday 05.07.2023 at 10.00am</p> <p>Please could Trustees advise the Clerk, at the earliest opportunity, if they are unable to attend a meeting.</p>	

Meeting closed at 11.30am

Impact of Meeting / Key Outcomes
Trustees reviewed the website QA and action plan
Trustees approved the Woodford Primary School Admissions Policy 2024-2025
The Chair of AF&R Committee gave Trustees an overview of the meeting in December 2022
Trustees were given an overview of the Trust AGM which had taken place in December 2022
Accountability and QA were the focus of the Trust Development Plan
Trust Growth was discussed at length, including an update on the due diligence process of the secondary school who had voted to join the Trust
Growth of the Executive Team was discussed and Trustees approved a new structure from September 2023
Executive Headteachers confirmed compliance with statutory requirements
Trustees discussed the framework for policy reviews going forward

C Nevin

C Nevin
Vice Chair of Governors
22.03.2023

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