

Trustees Board Minutes

Meeting	Trustees Board	Date	Wednesday, 12 th July 2023
Location	EKC Schools Trust Boardroom	Time	2pm
Membership	Tammy Mitchell (CEO), Graham Razey- Chair (GR), <i>Bernadette Lax – Vice Chair (BL)</i> , Peter Troke (PT), Peter Goldsack (PG), Michael Ashley (MA), Alan Horton (AH), Barbara Conroy (BC), Rebecca Chatwin (RC); Emma Wilkinson (EW); Ollie Laughton (OL)		
In Attendance	Chris Legg, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Sharon Hollingsworth, Group Director of Governance (DG) Claire Edgeworth, Executive Support Officer (CE) – Minute Taker		

Italics denote absence

	ITEM	COMMENTS	ACTION
1	Welcome and apologies for absence	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from BL.	
2	Declarations of Interest	There were no additional declarations to the meeting other than those declared as standing.	
3	Minutes of the meeting held 7 th March 2022 including any	The minutes from the meeting held on the 7 th March 2023, were agreed to be an accurate record and will be duly signed by the Chair following the meeting. AGREED – Minutes from the meeting held on the 7 th March 2023.	

	confidential minutes		
4	Matters arising not covered by this agenda	There were no matters arising.	
5	Members' appointments	<p>The bios for EW and OL had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Members of the Trust had recently interviewed and agreed the appointment of EW and OL as Trustees of the Board. DG proposed that the Trustees accepted the two appointments and all Trustees were in favour.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AGREED – EW and OL appointments to the Trustee Board with effect from 12 July 2023, both with a four-year term of office.</p> <p>Trustees discussed the current membership of the Trust Committees and agreed that EW will serve on the RAC Committee and OL will serve on the Finance Committee.</p> <p>EW and OL were invited into the meeting and introductions were made.</p>	
6.	Chairs Communication	Item 6 was deemed to be confidential and will form Part A of the minutes.	
7	CEO's Report	<p>The CEO report was circulated prior to the meeting. The Year 6 data was released 9 days later than planned and was only released yesterday, therefore the data was tabled at the meeting for Trustees to review.</p> <p>There has been a significant uplift in attendance data. The CEO advised that 1% is a big shift in attendance. The CEO had ranked the proportions of current free school meals in order of schools and attendance. Apart from Queenborough there is a correlation of disadvantaged children. The CEO has undertaken additional analysis at Briary due to the perceived lack of</p>	

		<p>impact. Briary has already addressed the children that they could change and are now working on the harder to reach. Several persistent absentees are new children to the school.</p> <p>The data from the Trust Surveys is positivity increasing year on year and this is down to the Director of Operations. There are some areas of work that need completing for our two new schools and we will support them. It was felt the Trust is in a strong place.</p> <p>The CEO advised that Arbor has been down and therefore could not complete all the absent rates, and this will be updated in September.</p> <p>The CEO advised that due to the pandemic, there were low levels of personal and social levels in Reception. There have been some positive outcomes for Bysing Wood, which is one of our most challenging cohorts and most children start below expectations. The expected phonic attainment is 85% and the schools are consistently meeting this target across all the schools.</p> <p>The Key Stage 1 statistics for last year were shared and the CEO advised that two years ago these children would have been in Reception but were not in school due to the pandemic, but progress has been made.</p> <p>The CEO advised that for the first time the national for Key Stage 2 did not go up and stayed at 59% and this shows the impact following Covid.</p> <p>Briary have had a significant uplift over attainment.</p> <p>At Bysing Wood, in 2022, their outcomes were 35% and well below national data and they are now in line with this. One more child would have made them in line with national. The biggest transformation was reading at 85% and this is above national, which is down to the work the school has undertaken.</p>	
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8	<p>Group Director of Governance Report to incl. Trust Board & Committee Membership update</p>	<p>The DG circulated her report prior to the meeting.</p> <p>DG presented a membership update and advised that MA has been reappointed as a Trustee by the Members of the Trust for another 3 years.</p> <p>The calendar of meetings for the next year was circulated and the calendar invites will go out during August.</p> <p>Trustee feedback forms were circulated for Holywell, Briary and East Stour plus feedback from a budget meeting by BC.</p> <p>In the Holywell feedback, Trustees queried if there was anything else Trustees could do to facilitate greater exchange of information / ideas between schools. PG advised that they are aware sharing good practice happens at Headteacher level but queried if it happens at other levels. The CEO advised there is an early career framework that meet every week and tour round the schools. There are also Subject Leaders Networks Forums in 11 subject areas across the curriculum three times a year and two face to face. There is also a DSL and SENCO group but there is nothing set up for Support Staff, this is due to difficulties around hours worked and many do not drive. Trustees queried if this could happen in school and the CEO advised currently it does not, but it should. Trustees agreed that at the visits, the Trustees should talk to the Support staff. AH acknowledged that there is also a wider issue with the LGBs going</p>	

		<p>into schools, as the Governors are not well known in their schools. BC queried if Headteachers need to communicate more regarding events in school for Governors to attend.</p> <p>It was agreed that schools would be asked to provide a room for the Trustees to discuss the visit and complete the feedback form. This will be arranged. A list of dates for Trustees to visit schools will come out in August.</p> <p>DG advised that we are currently clerking for four schools and have had requests from East Stour and Churchill who are looking to take up the service next year. Some of the existing schools have given good feedback regarding the Clerking Service and DG noted her thanks to Georgia Shelton and Claire Edgeworth for their excellent work. The Chair acknowledged this was a testament to our model and the feedback is good.</p> <p>GR has met with some Trustees but had to cancel some meetings and he will rebook these and bring a summary report to the next meeting. The Chair will share with the CEO.</p> <p>NOTED: Group Director of Governance Report incl. Trust Board & Committee Membership update</p>	<p>DG</p> <p>Chair</p>
9	Trust Budget 2023-24 and 3-year Budget Financial Return	<p>The CFO circulated the Trust Budget 2023-2024 prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The table at the bottom of the first page was a summary. Schools had been given a clear summary of what the budgeted out-turn needed to look like.</p> <p>Bysing Wood will get funding for an extra 49 pupils compared to the previous year and have set a budget to begin to build the required level of reserves. All other schools have broken even.</p>	

		<p>The CFO has built a draft budget for Churchill. They had sent over their KCC budget and from this the CFO would expect them to break even.</p> <p>Pension charges will be decided by KCC Actuaries.</p> <p>There is a clear reserves policy of £25k per form of entry per school based on 6 months absence for a teacher and 5% GAG funding to cover as a back-up fund. This is approximately 12%, well within the 20% threshold set as a maximum expected level by the DfE.</p> <p>Budget Forecast Returns are due by the end of August.</p> <p>Churchill will come in at a 3% top-slice and the CEO advised the average at other schools is 8%.</p> <p>The CFO asked if the Trustees would approve the budget and the Trustees agreed unanimously.</p> <p>APPROVED – EKC Schools Trust Budget 2023-2024</p>	
10	Trust Management Accounts May 2023	<p>The CFO circulated the Trust Management Accounts for May 2023 prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The CFO advised that there is a steady picture and there were no surprises in the reforecast. The schools are on track to deliver a level of cash that will give us similar levels of cash reserve as current. There is £610k of capital grant to spend and this is expected to be spent in the new few months. The KPIs show that our percentage spend on pay is 76.6% which falls below the 80% that would raise concerns.</p> <p>There is £1.2m in the Bank and this is generating some interest income.</p> <p>AH had attended the Budget Workshops and queried if the schools had picked up on the information in the workshops. The CFO advised he has prepared a Credibility Check and will test this at the end of the year. Lisa Hogan, Group Head of Financial Planning and Analysis has advised that the Business Managers at the four founding schools are now producing stronger data and has given good feedback. The CFO advised that there are a couple of</p>	

		<p>schools that have balanced their budget by understanding their non pay budget better to enable reductions to be made in some areas.</p> <p>The Trustees agreed that once we have right safety net, we need to make sure that schools are using their money.</p>	
11	Academies Financial Handbook update	<p>The Academies Financial Handbook 2023 had been published and was circulated to Trustees prior to the meeting. The changes are listed on page 7 of the handbook.</p> <p>The CFO presented a PowerPoint to highlight the changes and explain the implications.</p> <p>NOTED: Academies Financial Handbook 2023</p>	
12	Feedback from Committee meetings:	<p><u>Risk and Audit Committee - 25/05/23</u></p> <p>The minutes were circulated from the RAC Committee held on the 25th May 2023. There had been feedback from the Headteacher Wellbeing Survey, and this was followed up at the LGB meetings. The Internal Auditors had presented their Summary Internal Audit to the RAC Committee today and had given a clean bill of health. There are two advisories to consider. The first is the Fixed Assets and the second was the production of the VAT Returns. Additionally, there was a suggestion to consider areas to audit outside of internal controls next time.</p> <p><u>Finance Committee 22/06/23</u></p> <p>MA advised that at the last meeting, the Finance Committee had gone through the budget and implications and were comfortable with the presented budget. The Bysing Wood expansion loan (3-year plan) had also been discussed. Based on the figures produced, the school can meet their commitment to repay over 3 years.</p> <p>Support staff pay was discussed and was due to go through RAC Committee before coming to the Trust Board meeting. The CEO will send to the Chair of the RAC Committee and will then discuss via email. The Finance Committee were comfortable with the proposals but had some concerns around implementation, as they did not want staff to be perceived to be in a worst situation. It was noted that staff can develop to get to the top of the range, however there is a risk and the Finance Committee wanted their concerns to be noted. The Chair</p>	CEO

		advised there was also concern that some staff might not want to move onto the new pay scale and the CEO advised that they could stay where they are but within 12 months, they would fall behind what the Trust is offering. It was agreed that the selling the new pay scale was important, but this was around saving jobs.	
13	Performance Review of the CEO	Item 13 was deemed to be confidential and will form Part B of the minutes.	
14	Any Other Business	<u>KMA Conference</u> AH and MA attended the KMA Conference and gave feedback to the meeting. The message at the Conference was that there is a clear case for expansion into MATs. It was felt that to be sustainable, MATs needed Trusts to be a minimum of 7 or 8 and anything up to 20. It was felt that the two presenters understood what was needed. The presentations are available for Trustees if they wished to view them. AH advised that the message was that MATs needed to go above and beyond education to schools and the CEO agreed that Trusts need to be doing supportive outreach work, and this was about the new Trust Framework and Trusts need a school improvement offer. AH felt we ticked every box.	
15	Matters Considered Confidential	Item 6, Chairs Communication Item 13, Performance Review of the CEO	
16	Date and time of next meeting	Wednesday, 19 th September 2023 at 2.00 pm	

There being no further business the meeting closed at 4.19 pm.

Signed: ..... Print: GRAHAM RAZZEY..... Dated: 9 October 2023.....