

Trustees Board Minutes

Meeting	Trustees Board	Date	Tuesday, 15 th July 2021
Location	Executive Boardroom, Broadstairs College	Time	2.00 pm
Membership	<p>Tammy Michell (CEO), Jonathan Clarke (Chair), <i>Graham Razey (GR)</i>, Peter Troke (PT), Hannah Tudor (HT), <i>Paul Wilson (PW)</i>, Bernadette Lax (BL), <i>Peter Goldsack (PG)</i>, Chris Argent (CA)</p> <p>Michael Ashley (MA) and Suzy Hollett (SH) joined the meeting at 14.11.</p>		
In Attendance	<p>Chris Legg, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Sharon Hollingsworth, Director of Governance (DoG) Claire Edgeworth (CE) – Notetaker</p>		

**Italics denotes absence*

	ITEM	COMMENTS	ACTION
1	Welcome and apologies for absence	<p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>The Chair advised that PW was taking a sabbatical until December 2021 due to health problems. The CEO advised that a fruit hamper had been sent to PW from the Trustee Board and PW had acknowledged receipt and had sent his thanks. The Trustee Board sent their best wishes for a speedy recovery to PW.</p>	
2	Declarations of Interest	There were no additional declarations to the meeting other than those declared as standing.	

3	Minutes of the meeting held 2 nd March 2021, including any confidential minutes	The minutes from the meeting held on 2 nd March 2021 had been circulated to Trustees prior to the meeting. The minutes and confidential minutes were reviewed and approved as an accurate record. The signing of the minutes will be undertaken by the Chair following the meeting.	
4	Matters arising not covered by this agenda	Item 6, CEO's Report - TM to share update regarding the Kent Test.	CEO
5	Trustee appointments: Suzy Hollett (cv) Michael Ashley (cv)	The DG advised that the Members had met with two potential Trustees and the CVs of Suzy Hollett and Michael Ashley had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Trustees queried if the Skills Matrix had been looked at and DG confirmed that it had, and that SH covered the HR skills element that was missing on the Trustee Board. PROPOSAL: Trustees to vote Suzy Hollett and Michael Ashley as being appointed Trustees on to the Trustee Board with immediate effect. RESOLVED: The above proposal was agreed unanimously by the Trustees. The appointed Trustees were invited into the Board Meeting at 14.11 and introductions made.	
6	Chairs Communication	The Trustees had visited some of the schools since the last meeting and the Chair advised the only school, he had been unable to visit was Queenborough. The feedback from the Head Teachers was positive and they acknowledged the support that the Trust is providing, and they are clear on their goals and objectives.	
7	CEO's Report	The CEO report was circulated to Trustees prior to the meeting and CEO highlighted key areas of the report.	

The CEO advised that the paper contains school data and outcomes, but the data is not based on any form of testing and advised that all the schools have had different Covid experiences. Data sets have been moderated but are internal data.

The CEO provided some headlines from the school parent and carer surveys in the Spring Term from Queenborough and Briary. Bysing Wood and Holywell analysis was not fully completed in time for the meeting. This has now been reviewed in detail by CEO and shared with school Governors and stakeholders.

The CEO advised that during the next year there will be some recovery money and the CEO will be looking at how this money should be spent and monitoring the impact.

No schools have been inspected by Ofsted this academic year, so the data remains as per the last report.

The CEO advised that despite the pandemic and this being the Trust's first year, quite a lot has been achieved from the Trust Strategic Plan and these were highlighted in the Trustee report.

The CEO had attached four appendices to the report:

Appendix 1 - Safeguarding Report

Each Academy is responsible for the safeguarding of their pupils. The Trust undertakes a full safeguarding review on an annual basis. All four Academies have undergone a full Safeguarding Review conducted by CEO and Director of Operations. The CEO advised that the Reviews had been positive and reassuring, especially as there had been so many new measures needed to be put into place.

One area that requires more systematic scrutiny is the Central Records to ensure they are always 100% accurate and up to date. New approaches to checks and balances at all levels have been put into place.

Appendix 2 - Peer to Peer Review

The Chair of the Trustees had agreed the arrangements for the Peer to Peer Review and the CEO is working with the CEO from the Galaxy Trust and they are holding each other to account. They undertook a Safeguarding Desktop Review and moving forward will include school visits.

Appendix 3 - Trust Survey Results

The survey is completed by Headteachers, School Business Managers and Chairs of Local Boards. The results overall have increased.

Appendix 4 – Leadership Development Plan 2020 – 2021

Trustees were provided with the Trust Leadership Development Programme at the start of the Academic Year. Despite the significant implications of COVID, the Trust has continued to work with leaders in the Academy, providing quality CPD opportunities and continuing to strengthen and add value to the Trust.

HT queried as there was no published data, had the schools been advised of standardised assessments in year 6. The CEO advised that she spoke to each Head Teacher especially around data vulnerabilities and how they would compare to previously and a separate plan was put in place. From September there will be a baseline for each year in all four schools. In the past year due to bubble closures, it has been difficult to do a baseline. The Local Governing Boards will be provided with the progress throughout the year.

HT queried what the decision was around the Early Career Framework offer. The CEO advised that there is new legislation around statutory support for new Year 1 Teachers, and this has now been extended to 2 years and support offered to all schools. Schools can either deliver their own training using DfE accredited materials or sign up to provider led induction. There is some funding available to provide additional release time. A decision has been made to go with using one of the providers as it is less insular, more able to network and better links with the Teaching school hub. There are a number of newly qualified teachers

	<p>starting in September, especially at Queenborough and there has been an extra post added to lead on this. We will review this and change if there is a better provider.</p> <p>The Chair felt the report concerning Covid 19 and education was concerning and queried what guidance had come from the DfE and what the schools were planning. The CEO advised that she has worked with the schools individually to look at specific issues and there are Trust-wide things that will be in the Strategic Plan around recovery and inclusion. The CEO informed the Trustees that it has been identified that the formal classification of vulnerable students has changed and there are a lot of pupils in our schools that now meet this category. The CEO explained the change in detail and HT felt it was important to note that the pupils that have moved into the vulnerable category were deemed vulnerable before the pandemic and not because of the pandemic.</p> <p>The CEO advised that in terms of our general focus, there are a lot of our children that come in below national average and the schools are working on speaking and language development, reading, and writing and basic skills. The CEO advised that the schools continue to work on English and maths and spend next year looking at how we broaden the curriculum. The catch-up funding was spent bringing someone in to work with the adults. The CEO advised the records note that where children have been in and not been in a bubble closure, they have made progress.</p> <p>MA queried what action had been taken to look at pupil wellbeing and the CEO advised that all schools had undertaken pupil voice, but no surveys had been undertaken. The CEO has met with pupils informally and formally and there was a lot done at the beginning of the year around supporting children who have suffered loss including loss of going out. Referrals to external agencies were being monitored and they have gone up, but not to the level mentioned in the media.</p> <p>MA also queried if the Trust was looking at staff wellbeing and the CEO advised that this was being monitored by the Local Governing Boards and she had spoken to them. One school</p>	
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had undertaken staff interviews and temperature testing around the building and the CEO has also spoken to the staff. Any staff that are leaving, are leaving for a good reason.

CA queried how we can build on the Satisfaction Survey and involve the community, in particular in areas where we have capacity available and to look at the collective value of the Trust. The CEO acknowledged that it was difficult balance being a silent partner and having a voice. The CEO explained some of the Trust wide initiatives that were taking place, particularly around social action, but each school needs to build relationships in their own area, and it will be unique to each school. The schools are choosing to add the EKC Schools Trust logo to their paperwork and last year the schools requested some information around EKC Group facilities to hand to perspective reception class children. The CEO felt that one of the biggest selling factors was around school improvement training where they are discussing training with external schools.

The CEO and CFO have been working on the growth plan and what the strategy will be and are keen not to lose sight of what the original plan was.

The Chair felt that in terms of promoting the Trust, it is self-perpetuating as the Trust and Group are very powerful and the Trustees acknowledged the benefit of the Trust and Group working together.

The CEO advised that the towns of Herne Bay and Whitstable have just had a baby boom and so in a few years there will not be enough places, however acknowledged that Kent has not had accurate figures for quite some time and are looking at an open form of entry. KCC might want some money back and the CEO advised that this might come back to Trustees to add their support to her response.

NOTED: The CEO's Report.

8	Director of Governance Report	<p>The DG's report was circulated to Trustees prior to the meeting. DG led Trustees through the report and NOTED the following key items:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">That we currently do not have any vacancies on the Trustee Board.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Due to the possibility of further schools joining the Trust, Members have agreed to look at increasing the Member Group from 3 – 5. Two potential candidates have been proposed and an update will be circulated to Trustees in due course .</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">It was agreed at the last Trustee Board meeting that GR would join the RAC Committee temporarily, however in accordance with the Trust Governance Agreement there is a requirement for the CEO of the Group (GR) to serve on the RAC Committee, the position is therefore permanent.</p> <p>DG advised that following PW's temporary leave of absence, it was recommended that MA could join the Finance Committee, given his expertise. This has been discussed with MA and the Trustees agreed and were asked to vote.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">APPROVED: The vote was unanimous for MA to join the Finance Committee on a temporary basis.</p> <p>The DG advised that the Trustee Development Plan was approved by the Board last November and she has circulated webinars and training to Trustees that have come through The Key.</p> <p>The new version of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE)) comes into force in September 2021 and the link was in the DG report. Trustees were asked to e-mail to the DG when this has been read.</p> <p>The Trustees have undertaken visits to the schools and DG will amend the report to show that JCI was unable to attend Queenborough.</p> <p>The feedback from the visits was included in the report and the CEO thanked everyone for attending. The Trustees acknowledged this had helped them see the different demographics between the schools. The DG will circulate another cycle of dates for visits during next year and the Trustees were asked to try to attend at least one school. PT felt it</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">DG</p>
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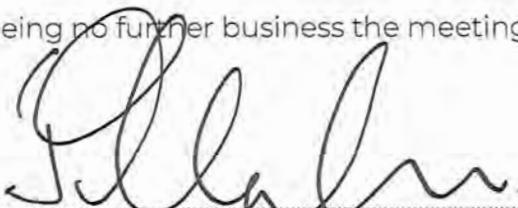
		<p>would be useful to have an area to focus on during the visits and the CEO felt it should be around the Trust Strategic Plan. DG to amend the plan to show that the Chair was unable to attend Queenborough.</p> <p>The dates for future meetings were included in the DG report.</p> <p>CA gave feedback from the recent Finance Committee as the minutes were not yet available. HT queried how the finance year works and was advised it is August to July. The CEO advised that after the Q3 review, once the schools know what they have spent, school improvement visits take place to look at what they can and cannot do. HT felt that this meant we can front load the spending if needed and there are no surprises at the end of the year. The CEO and CFO have been working on a plan for an emergency pot that sits in a central Trust budget so that other monies can be spent by the schools on the children. CA agreed that reserves would prevent uncomfortable conversations with the schools as there is a buffer there to deal with potential problem areas.</p> <p>The Trustees agreed that the money needs to be spent on the pupils and not trying to spend budget at end of the year on resources.</p> <p>DG advised that the Skills Audit will be undertaken in August.</p> <p>DG is working on all Trustees having access to the EKC Schools Trust intranet site which is where training and papers will sit.</p>	
9	Admissions Policy	<p>The Admissions Policy was circulated to Trustees prior to meeting as there had been a statutory change to the policy. Children who are coming from abroad are now classed the same as children who are looked after children.</p> <p>APPROVED: The Trustees were asked to approve the Admissions Policy, and this was approved unanimously.</p>	

10	Trust Budget 2021-22	<p>The CFO advised he had shared the budget and processes previously to the Finance Committee and has brought it to the Trustee Board for resolution.</p> <p>The CFO went through the Trust budget which had been circulated to Trustees prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The CFO advised that risks had been looked at, as we cannot cover for all catastrophes under insurance. HT suggested that newly qualified teachers were now probably not a viable option due to the mentoring, therefore costs will now be comparable to an experienced teacher. It was acknowledged that new class teachers are difficult to manage.</p> <p>The CFO felt we need to understand the financial implications and as we now have a full year history, next year's non pay budget should be easier to work out and give the schools a greater level of comfort as to what they can afford to budget for. There is an obligation to produce a 3-year budget return, and this will be 1 year into the future. The CFO advised there has been some global assumptions around the pay budget going forward.</p> <p>The CFO advised that some things did not happen due to Covid which has left the Trust in a better position. We are aware that next year there are falling pupil role numbers and Briary has lost a class and Queenborough has lost their bulge class but this was expected.</p> <p>There has been a reduction in high needs funding so there was a cautious approach to the budget.</p> <p>Pay costs are fairly stable and there are some extra posts across all schools. The number of Teaching Assistants tends to fluctuate and there have been some savings around admin posts.</p> <p>Premises costs have been reduced and it is possible we might be able to identify further savings throughout the year.</p>	
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11	Trustees Management Accounts – May 2021	<p>The CFO circulated the Management Accounts for May prior to the meeting. The CFO advised that the month of May was a quiet month and exceeded the budget. The budget has a surplus of £213k and our performance was strong, however there is a suspicion that the non-pay forecast might be conservative and may deliver a stronger result at the year-end. The CFO advised that we now have a breakdown per school and our forecasting is ahead of budget.</p> <p>The Trustees did not raise any questions.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NOTED: The Management Accounts for May</p>	
12	Academies Financial Handbook 2021 update	<p>PowerPoint slides detailing the key updates to the Academies Financial Handbook 2021 had been produced by the CFO and circulated to Trustees prior to the meeting. The CFO advised that the Finance Committee had received the same slides at their last meeting. It was noted that the Finance Committee had a thorough discussion regarding the key changes and impact of these in detail. The CFO invited questions. The Trustees did not raise any questions.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NOTED: The updates to the Academies Financial Handbook 2021</p>	
13	Any other business	<u>Bank Holiday</u>	

		<p>The CEO advised that next year the Queen has given the country an extra bank holiday and moved the Monday Bank Holiday at the end of May, to the Thursday and Friday, but this falls in May half term. The CEO would like approval from the Trustees that the teachers are given an extra day's holiday and the schools can decide how they manage it.</p> <p>APPROVAL: The CEO asked the Trustees to approve an extra day's holiday for the staff in May and the schools to decide how they manage this. The Trustees approved this unanimously. The CEO to share the outcome with the staff.</p> <p><u>Trust Growth</u></p> <p>This item was deemed confidential and will form Confidential Minutes Part A.</p>	CEO
14	Matters considered confidential	Item 13 - Any other business – Trust Growth	
15	Date and time of next meeting	Thursday, 21 st September 2021	

There being no further business the meeting closed at 15.41.

Signed:  Print: Jonathan Cooke Dated: 21/9/2021.