

Trustees Board Minutes

Meeting	Trustees Board	Date	Tuesday, 21 st September 2021
Location	Executive Boardroom, Broadstairs College	Time	2.00 pm
Membership	Tammy Mitchell (CEO), Jonathan Clarke (Chair), Graham Razey (GR), Peter Troke (PT), <i>Hannah Tudor (HT)</i> , <i>Paul Wilson (PW)</i> , Bernadette Lax (BL), Peter Goldsack (PG), Chris Argent (CA), Michael Ashley (MA) and Suzy Hollett (SH)		
In Attendance	Chris Legg, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Sharon Hollingsworth, Director of Governance (DG) Naomi Morris (NM) – Notetaker		

**Italics denotes absence*

	ITEM	COMMENTS	ACTION
1	Appointment of the Chair and the Vice Chair of the Trustees Board	Trustees noted the outcome of the nomination and election process in that JC and GR had been elected to continue to stand as Chair (JC) and Vice Chair (GR) for this academic year. DG had approached both JC and GR prior to the meeting to establish their willingness to continue, for which they both agreed. AGREED: JC to continue as Chair of Trustees and GR to continue as Vice-Chair of Trustees for the 2021-22 academic year.	
2	Welcome and apologies for absence	The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. Apologies were received from HT and PW.	
3	Declarations of Interest	There were no additional declarations to the meeting other than those declared as standing items.	

4	Minutes of the meeting held 15 th July 2021, including any confidential minutes	<p>The minutes from the meeting held on 15th July 2021 had been circulated to Trustees prior to the meeting. The minutes and confidential minutes were reviewed and approved as an accurate record.</p> <p>It was noted that PG had provided his apologies for the last meeting, but this had not been reflected within the Minutes.</p> <p>The signing of the minutes will be undertaken by the Chair following the meeting.</p>	
5	Matters arising not covered by this agenda	There were no matters arising.	
6	Chairs Communication	The Chair welcomed the recently appointed Trustees SH and MA to the meeting and invited the CEO to present her report.	
7	CEO's Reports	<p>The CEO presented the Trust Strategic Improvement Plan 2021-22 and the Trust Leadership Development Programme 2021-2022, both had been circulated to Trustees prior to the meeting. The following key areas were highlighted from the reports.</p> <p>The reports had been presented by the CEO for approval. The CEO highlighted the importance of being clear of the focus for the next twelve months, and assured members that she will provide regular updates throughout the year against the strategic priorities within the Plan.</p> <p>The CEO advised that the focus of the development of our leaders is in response to the continual changes in the education sector and explained that recruitment of leaders can often be challenging therefore a robust succession plan will be in place going forward.</p> <p>GR reflected on the effects of the pandemic and the impact that this might have in delivering the Improvement Plan, he queried whether there are measures in place to overcome any</p>	

		<p>potential delays. The CEO noted that it is likely there will be challenges particularly regarding the attendance for the most vulnerable groups of pupils within the Trust. It was noted that this is always seen as a challenge and is a key focus for the coming year. The CEO emphasised the importance of a strong personal development agenda. GR commented that this had taken a back seat recently and noted that further delay will have an impact on the Trust's ability to move forward. The CEO noted that the Trust had successfully delivered its Leadership and Development programme last year despite the pandemic and will continue to implement it this year.</p> <p>It was noted that despite the pandemic network meetings had continued and had been held virtually.</p> <p>Trustees questioned whether the leaders had recognised the importance of the staff development agenda and the CEO clarified that they had and have agreed to participate fully in the development of their staff.</p> <p>BL sought clarification as to the training that will be put in place for Headteachers and Heads of Department regarding the flexible learning options (FLO's) to support the most vulnerable pupil attendance, being mindful of the differing patterns now in this area. The CEO stated that the newly formed network that has been launched recently will have a key focus to develop the strategy for attendance.</p> <p>PT noted the quality of education goals against foundation subjects and the common approach to all of them. The CEO explained that this is part of all school development plans.</p> <p>Trustees noted the change regarding assessment by Ofsted in that schools who are graded as 'good' must provide evidence that their foundation subjects are being assessed, it was noted that to date none of the schools have managed to find a way to show this. However, the CEO has designed a plan to overcome this which will be part of school's development plan moving forward and regular updates on this will be provided by the CEO to the Board.</p>	
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	<p>CA sought clarification as to whether the expenditure within the Plan had been costed within the financial plan and questioned if additional funding was available would it be required to support this area. The CEO explained that this will be dependent on the availability of resources and the identification of priorities.</p> <p>PT noted the potential need for additional resources in terms of support for the Trust senior leadership team (SLT). The CEO recognised this and advised that EKC Group is confident that the current SLT has capacity to manage workload but will revisit this item regularly.</p> <p>The Chair noted the need for individual development in line with each school organisational need. The CEO informed Trustees that she attends termly visits with schools to agree priorities in line with their strategic plan. Schools can adopt their own approach using strengths and expertise from others. This model has worked very well to date.</p> <p>It was agreed that it would be of benefit to Trustees to receive an executive summary overview of each school. The CEO agreed to provide this to Trustees before the October half term alongside a summary of parent's feedback.</p> <p>TM noted that a number of traditional metrics are in place to assess attendance in English and maths. The Chair felt feedback would be welcomed regarding this, CEO to action.</p> <p><i>Trust Growth update – This part was considered confidential and will form Confidential Minutes, Part A.</i></p> <p>MA noted the importance of lessons learned from the development plan in ensuring a positive impact going forward. The CEO discussed the Group's willingness to continue to stay true to its vision. GR raised concern regarding the potential risk of schools joining the Trust for the wrong reasons in the future and reiterated the importance of ensuring a robust application process to avoid this.</p> <p>APPROVED: The Trust Strategic Improvement Plan 2021-22 and,</p>	<p>CEO</p> <p>CEO</p>
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		The Trust Leadership Development Programme 2021-2022	
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>The special resolution of the Members Board to consider expansion of the board membership from three to five as part of the Trust growth plan. DG stated that Kristina Yates, Founder of the Turner Free Schools and Semi Ozyurt, Project Officer EKC Group had been appointed, this was noted by Trustees.</p> <p>Trustees noted the latest update from the DFE, regarding an updated model Articles of Association. The DG confirmed that due to the way in which the Trust currently operates there is no requirement for the new model to be adopted, but this will be regularly reviewed.</p> <p>It was agreed after some discussion that Trust Board and Committee meetings will be held in person in the Executive Suite, Broadstairs College with the option to hold meetings virtually if agreed at agenda setting meetings,</p> <p>DG had previously circulated the Trustees school visit plan. Trustees are required to undertake at least one school visit each year. Trustees agreed that the visits are beneficial and support the building of relationships.</p> <p>The Trustees and Members (restricted) area of the new Trust intranet had been launched. All Trustees have been provided with access to view the content. DG invited feedback.</p> <p>NOTED: The Director of Governance Report</p>	
9	CFO's Papers: - Financial Returns 2021-22	<p>The CFO informed Trustees that the Trust is currently in good financial health. A surplus of £224,000 was noted.</p>	

		<p>The CEO noted that all schools have tracked spend carefully using the guidance available to them. The CEO regularly meets with schools to discuss their Recovery Plan and that this is an Agenda item at all Local Governing Boards.</p> <p>CL led Trustees through the required 2021-22 ESFA financial returns for the EKC Schools Trust and the associated governance path to approval and went into detail behind some to provide Trustees with a deeper understanding.</p> <p>PT drew attention to the recent reimbursement of holiday pay for those who work term time in schools. The CEO explained that all staff involved have received a letter and guidance from ACAS along with an invitation to join a webinar. Costs will be reimbursed; staff will also be asked to sign a disclaimer. The CEO noted that a precedence has been set by KCC. GR suggested that the Group seek legal advice, CEO to action.</p>	CEO
10	Policy Report	<p>The Trustees had been sent a number of Trust policies during early September for their comment and these are now being presented for approval.</p> <p>The CEO expressed apologies for the delay in sending these out to Trustees which had been due to staff absence within the Team.</p> <p>BL noted that there is no policy for historic upper pay spine. Such policy allows teachers to apply for additional pay after successfully teaching for six years or more, this is determined through successful performance reviews and is designed to allow teachers to become 'experts' in their field. This has caused significant challenges due to inconsistency in how this is awarded. It was agreed that the CEO would provide statistical information in a 'SWOT' like format regarding teacher performance related pay for discussion at the next Risk, Audit and Compliance Committee meeting.</p> <p>APPROVED: The Trustees agreed to ratify all presented policies listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Charges and Remission Policy - Child Protection & Safeguarding 	CEO

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complaints Policy - Data Protection Policy - Disciplinary Policy - Equality and Diversity Policy - Financial Regulations - Grievance Policy - Health and Safety & Premises Management Policy - Pay Policy and accompanying paper - Risk Management Policy - Staff Code of Conduct - Whistle Blowing Policy 	
11	Feedback from CEO Performance Review (CEO, CFO and staff members not in attendance)	<i>This part was considered confidential and will form Confidential Minutes, Part A.</i>	
12	Any other business	<p>The CEO drew Trustees attention to the additional funding carried forward by Queenborough school and advised that it has been suggested that the money is used to fund a Baby and Toddler Nursery to complement its maintained pre-school, this was agreed by Trustees. The Business Plan for the project will be received by the Local Governing Board.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">APPROVED: Development of a Baby and Toddler Nursery at Queenborough</p> <p>The CEO noted the challenge regarding the £50,000 funding received from KCC by Bysing Wood to deliver additional learning. Due to COVID restraints the delivery of this learning had not been possible, and therefore funding is being withheld by KCC. However, the school has incurred cost's due to the teacher being recruited on a permanent basis to deliver the additional learning. The CEO wishes to appeal to KCC against their decision to withdraw the</p>	

		funds. Trustees agreed to support this approach, the CEO to draft a letter which the Chair agreed to sign. GR noted the importance of seeking legal advice, CEO to action.	CEO
13	Matters considered confidential	Item 7 – Trust Growth update Item 11 – Feedback from CEO's Performance Review	
14	Date and time of next meeting	Tuesday 7 th December 2021	

There being no further business the meeting closed at 3.45pm

Signed:  . Print: JONATHAN GURNI Dated: 7th December 2021