

Meeting	EKC Schools Trust Trustees Board Meeting	Date	Wednesday 15 th July 2020
Location	Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams	Time	2 pm
Membership	Tammy Michell (CEO) Jonathan Clarke (Chair), Graham Razey (GR), Chris Legg (CL), <i>Hannah Tudor (HT)</i> , Summer Macer (SM), Paul Wilson (PW), Peter Troke (PT) <i>Dave Butt (DB)</i>		
In Attendance	Jonathan Cresswell, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Sharon Hollingsworth, Director of Governance (DoG) Claire Edgeworth (Minutes)		

**Italics denotes absence*

	ITEM	COMMENTS	ACTION
1	Welcome and Apologies	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies was received from Hannah Tudor. Dave Butt was absent with apologies received following the meeting.	
2	Declarations of Interest	There were no additional declarations to the meeting other than those declared as standing.	
3	Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 March 2020	The minutes from the meeting held on 3 rd March 2020 were reviewed and approved as an accurate record. The remote e-signing of the minutes will be undertaken by the Chair following the meeting.	
4	Matters Arising	None	
5	Chair's Communication	The Chair reported that since the last Board meeting, he had met separately with the CEO via Teams on the 24 th June. It was evident from the call that a lot of work had been undertaken given the measures	

		<p>associated with the Coronavirus. It was a difficult time and he thanked the CEO and the Team for their hard work.</p> <p>The Chair informed members that there had also been two Finance Committee meetings held since the last Board meeting. Feedback from the meetings will be covered under part 9 of these minutes.</p>	
6	<p>Chief Executive Officer's Report</p>	<p>The CEO's Report and three update papers were circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The CEO brought one item to the meeting for resolution. The CEO asked the Board to support the proposal of the local governing body of each school to fully close their school over the summer period. It was noted that the schools had remained open during for vulnerable and key-worker children throughout the pandemic. Headteachers and staff had remained extremely flexible; they had worked long hours, weekends and had not taken any leave. The CEO asked members to support all four schools to fully closed over the forthcoming summer break to ensure the wellbeing of the staff.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">RESOLVED: The Trustees agreed all four schools to be fully closed over the summer period.</p> <p>The CEO reported that the Government have announced that plans for September will be sent out on the 24th August.</p> <p>The CEO advised that at this time of the year she would usually provide a longer paper and include an evaluation of the school's performance, summary data and self-evaluation overview. However due to the Covid-19 situation this had not been possible. There is no data as the pupils at the schools had not sat any tests and there had been no teacher assessments submitted. The CEO has seen some data but felt it was not appropriate to bring it to the meeting as it had not been validated.</p> <p>It was noted that the CEO had provided data regarding pupil numbers in her report and this is an area that the Risk, Audit and Compliance (RAC) Committee will need to look at in detail. The Board is aware that three out of the four schools were in a disadvantaged community and the need to look at the differences in the Trust is important. The CEO has met with the schools and it was noted that it will be a large part of the strategic work for the next year.</p> <p>There has been a lot of work undertaken around the marketing plans 2020 – 2021. The CEO has met with all Headteacher about their strategies, and the EKC Group Director of External Affairs has also spoken to the Headteachers and offered support.</p> <p>Bysing Wood and Holywell are due an Ofsted inspection but due to Covid-19, the CEO has been informed that inspections are now running five months behind. The CEO is aware that there is not a plan to increase the number of Inspectors, so it is anticipated that Ofsted will be behind with their visits. The CEO will continue to support all schools and in particular Bysing Wood and Holywell prior to their inspection. It is</p>	

predicted that there will be a heavy focus on curriculum matters as there will be no data available for the Inspectors to look.

The CEO will take a deeper look at attendance as this is an issue in all four schools.

All four schools undertook a self-evaluation recently and based on the CEO's knowledge and experience of the schools the results are broadly accurate although the CEO will be looking over the coming months for evidence to support the outcome from the self-evaluation process. The CEO is not aware of any major concerns.

The CEO noted that she would like to thank EKC Group staff on behalf of the Trust for all the work they have undertaken to support the schools. EKC Group staff have faced many challenges of their own but the staff have always remained very responsive and supportive to the schools.

The Trustees queried the intake for schools in September 2020. The CEO advised that:

- Queenborough are oversubscribed, their PAN is 60, and they have 10 appeals, but as they are part of an Academy they need to pay for any appeal. The number oversubscribed might increase to 61 as they may be required to take a Looked After Child.
- Bysing Wood have 24 applied and 4 more requests in the last week. There are families moving into new builds around the location so number may increase. Bysing Wood PAN is 30.
- Holywell have a PAN of 30 and 28 have applied.
- Briary are very low for the third year running. They have a PAN of 60 and only 33 applied and will be changing to a three-form entry in the next 4 – 5 years. Briary are in a disadvantaged area and the demographics puts parents off. There has however recently been a land swap and there is a large building development taking place at the back of the school. Briary has been identified as a priority for marketing. The Trustees queried if redundancies were being considered and the CEO advised that currently this is being managed by natural wastage, but this is a potential longer-term consideration.

The Trustees queried what was being undertaken to support the schools with online resources and improving their websites. The CEO advised that IT was not part of the Trust offer, however schools can ask for support and the Trust could develop a Service Level Agreement with EKC Group if they thought it would be beneficial. The EKC Group Director of Technology has offered a lot of advice and three of the schools have moved to Office 365, and all the schools have been supported to use online resources such as Teams and working with children remotely. It was noted that Holywell is a very forward-thinking school

and can offer support to other schools as they have been offering online lessons for a few years. The CEO feels the schools are in a good place and so this is not a cause for concern.

The CEO advised that there is a plan to buy in some training from EKC Group that they have already been rolling out to EKC Group staff, and this will enable the schools to make significant savings.

The Trustees are aware that historically when schools move out of KCC control the pupil numbers tend to decline as some schools increase their PAN and queried if there had been any evidence of this. The CEO advised that there had been a lot of work around this prior to conversion and the only school able to increase would be Briary due to highways and this has been signed off as a school of choice for expansion for Coastal Canterbury area. The geographical areas and the catchment area of the remaining three schools were discussed and the CEO advised that if we get the marketing right the Trust is in a good place.

The Trustees queried what marketing was being planned. The CEO has met with each school to look at their unique selling point and their challenges, and the Director of External Affairs has provided an extensive list of ways that media, social media and the local community can be engaged, and will work with the schools to offer advice. Marketing is also on the agenda for the Headteacher meetings. The Trust website is also being strengthened with a lot of pictures and these are just being finalised. A leaflet is being produced for every prospective reception parent that visits each school. The leaflet will highlight what EKC Schools Trust can offer and why they should choose us. Queenborough do not want to undertake any marketing at this stage.

One of the Trustees was aware that there have been some issues around monthly budget monitoring and systems running effectively. The CEO advised that finance was the biggest shift and complex change that the schools had to undertake. The CFO has been meeting with the Business Managers and trying to sort any interim problems. One area of concern is how questions are communicated as there are too many people getting involved and the CEO has met with the Business Managers to look at this. On both sides it is acknowledged that we can only deal with issues as they arise. Due to Covid-19 everyone is working in isolation and this has caused problems as two people cannot look at the same screen to answer queries, but despite this the bottom line is correct.

The Chair noted that Queenborough were doing well on self-evaluation maintaining outstanding and it would be good if they could pass over their skills and knowledge to the other schools. The CEO advised that Queenborough was our first school and apart from attendance, felt there was no reason why they would not retain their outstanding grade. The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher at Queenborough feel that they are also learning from the other schools.

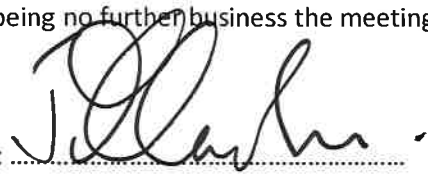
There were no further questions and the Chair thanked the CEO for her report.

7	EKC Schools Trust Risk Register	<p>The CEO presented the first draft of the Academy Risk Register explaining that it would normally come to the Risk, Audit and Compliance (RAC) Committee for review, but given that the inaugural meeting of the RAC Committee is scheduled for September, it has come to the Board to be agreed.</p> <p>The CEO advised that Covid-19 is the biggest risk at present but there are others that we should be mindful of. The CEO asked that Trustees think about the Growth Strategy, if we grow too quickly, we could lose what we are good at, however if we grow too slowly, we are at risk of not surviving.</p> <p>The Chair asked if the Trust Improvement Strategy had started. The CEO advised that she had met with the Headteachers in the week and they had provided a lot of information which the CEO will pull together, including their list of priorities. Attendance will be a key priority. The Chair advised the Board that this is a key priority for the Trust, and we should be firming up our plans soon.</p> <p>A Trustee advised that a key benefit is the work that EKC Group colleges are doing with primary schools in enriching students. However, it was noted that this will be an issue for the first two terms due to Covid-19 and queried what is the plan to counter the fact that some of the activities will not take place. The CEO advised that this matter had been discussed at the recent Headteacher meeting and also with the College Principals, but with the College's Recovery Plan that is due to be implemented in the Autumn, there is little that the Trust can do to address this currently as the schools have huge amounts of work to do and under their own Risk Assessments they are not welcoming visitors on site. They had looked at implementing digital activities between the college and the school, but the College has a lot of work to manage also. The CEO is meeting with Principals and Headteachers in October to agree the plan.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AGREED – the Trustees agreed the presented Academy Risk Register.</p>	
8	Governance Report	<p>The DoG provided an update regarding the current membership of the Trust including the Terms of office. There are currently two Trustee vacancies as DB has recently resigned. The DoG presented the draft role description for the Trustee Board Member, for consideration. If the Trustees were in agreement, the DoG will send the role description with a note to each of the Chairs of the local governing Boards, to establish if there are any independent local governing board members interested in joining the Trust. The Trustees felt that as DB was Chair of the Finance Committee, it would be helpful if his replacement had an accountancy background. The DoG will note this in her note.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AGREED – the Trustees were comfortable with the presented role description and the proposed approach to the local governing boards, as outlined above.</p> <p>There have been two Finance Committee meetings and the minutes have been circulated to the Trustees. The DoG noted that there has been an additional Finance Committee meeting added to the calendar for the 20th August 2020, to primarily look at the 3-year budget forecast return which needs to be submitted</p>	DoG to contact Chairs of the local governing boards to seek suitable candidates for Trustee role

		<p>The CFO had produced a narrative around the May Management Accounts, and this had been discussed at the last Finance Committee meeting. The minutes from the Committee meeting had been circulated to Trustees prior to the meeting. The CFO advised that the Management Accounts would be developed over the coming months and as this was new to both the schools and EKC Schools Trust, the focus has been on developing the budgets and consistency across all the schools with regards to coding and getting these aligned with how the schools wish to work and what the Trust is required to report to the funding body. The CFO reported that meetings had taken place between each School Business Manager and the CFO's team, the discussions at these meetings had focused on how income and expenditure should be recorded. The schools are now in a better position to map the codes to different levels, to help generate reports.</p> <p>The Trustees felt there was a large swing in the figures in the accounts and noted a negative position in the actual figure relating to premises expenditure and queried if this was an underspend due to Covid-19 and whether the forecast needs adjusting. There was also double the income for high needs funding than the Trust were expecting, and the Trustees asked the CFO to explain these figures. The CEO explained that the increased high needs funding was from Early Years High Needs Funding and SCA funding for Queenborough as they have a lot of special needs children in the Nursery that had not been calculated in, and two other schools had been successful in applications for high needs, high cost funding. The CFO explained that the water charges were a lot higher than expected but one school had had a water leak. These variances had been discussed at the Finance Committee.</p> <p>A member questioned if at future Trustee Board Meetings whether it would be the CFO or the Finance Committee Chair reporting back. The CEO felt it would be appropriate for the Committee Chair to report back as the CFO would have already reported to the Finance Committee. The CEO had not asked the current Chair of the Finance Committee to report back as he had recently resigned from the Board. The RAC Committee Chair had not yet been appointed, The Trustees agreed it would be more appropriate for the Chairs to report back as they are able to pull out the key matters for discussion. All Trustees agreed with the proposed reporting arrangements going forwards.</p> <p>The CFO reported that he had put together four Financial KPI's for benchmarking purposes and these were discussed at the Finance Committee and suggestions put forward on areas to look at. The Trustees had some queries regarding the presented benchmarking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'School by Percentage' - the CFO explained that this is a surplus position and the budget was set at the beginning and the forecast is where we are at in the May accounts. • The Trustees agreed the change of 'Average Cost per Teacher' to 'Cost per FTE'. The average cost per teacher would not include part timers so this would not be a true reflection at schools like Bysing Wood that have a lot of 0.8 teachers. Queenborough have a lot of staff on the lower spine pay scale and Briary have a lot of upper spine paid teachers so this needs to be reflected. It was 	<p>DoG to make Committee Chairs aware of the reporting arrangements to the Trustee Board</p>
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		<p>felt if the change is made to 'Cost per FTE' this would show an average salary cost per FTE at each school and could open conversations around strategies to keep salary bills down.</p> <p>The Board agreed that the presented KPI's were a good starting point but needed further work.</p> <p>The CFO had submitted the Financial Management and Governance Self-Assessment (FMGS) Report to the ESFA on the 3rd June. The CFO reported that the detail within the report was discussed at the last Finance Committee meeting and the that the FMGS was being presented to the Board for information. Completion of the form was a mandatory requirement for all new Academies. The Trustees agreed that the document provided a good level of assurance. The CFO advised that there will be an annual submission going forwards, but this will be a slightly different piece of work looking at where we are and not what we plan to do.</p> <p>There were no further questions and the Chair thanked the CFO for his report.</p>	
10	Any Other Business	None reported.	
11	Matters Considered Confidential	There were no matters considered confidential.	
12	Date of Next Meeting	<p>The date of the next Trustees Board meeting is 22nd September 2020.</p> <p>Discussion followed whether the next meeting would be held face to face or virtual. A Risk Assessment is in place and the venue will be separate from the main Broadstairs College. The CEO and Chair will meet to discuss this.</p> <p>The date of the additional virtual Finance Committee meeting is 20th August 2020.</p>	

There being no further business the meeting closed at 15.06.

Signed: 

Print: JONATHAN CLARKE

Date: 20/10/2020.