

Board of Trustees

Wednesday 8 February 2023, 4.30pm

Staff Room, St Luke's School

Attended:

Andy Mulcock (AM) - Chair	Philip Bostock (PB) – Vice Chair
James Frampton (JF)	Teresa Gardner (TG)
Richard Jacobs (RJ)	Sarah O'Meara (SOM)
Saxon Spence (SS) <i>Virtually</i>	Alex Walmsley (AW)
Lee Elliot-Major (LEM) <i>Virtually</i>	Crispin Taylor (CT)
In Attendance	
Melody Floyde (MF) – Clerk to the Trust	Tamsin Frances – Director of People & Strategy (TF)
Siobhan Meredith (SM) – Director of Education	Lorraine Mitchell (LM) – Head of Corporate Governance & Compliance
Sue Pym (SP) – Director of Finance	Tim Rutherford (TR) – Deputy CEO

Apologies:

Lindsay Hetherington (LH) Ben Manning (BM) Moira Marder (MM) – CEO Jon Lunn (JL) – Director of Education Performance

Meeting Minutes

Item No.	Business	Action
1.	<p>Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest</p> <p>AM welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Ben Manning, Lindsay Hetherington, Moira Marder and Jon Lunn.</p> <p>Jade Otty was in attendance as an observer and would be completing the appointment process to become a Trustee. Jade is Vice Principal at Exeter College. A round of introductions was undertaken.</p> <p>Declarations of interest were noted, as follows: AW: Director, First Federation Trust. AW, AM, RJ, SP: Directors, Fusion School Services Ltd (Item 11)</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of Previous Meeting and Update on Actions.</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 07.12.22 were approved as a full and accurate record.</p> <p>All actions were recorded as complete.</p>	
3.	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>None</p>	

<p>4.</p>	<p>Chief Executive Officers Update</p> <p>The CEO report had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The Senior Executive Team talked through the report in MM's absence. It had been a positive start to the year with emerging challenges.</p> <p>SM gave an overview of the Trust schools currently receiving intensive support.</p> <p>A full record of the discussion is recorded in Part B of the Minutes.</p> <p>SS joined the meeting at 16:50</p> <p><i>Why is Whipton Barton still struggling?</i> Whipton has been a very inclusive school however there have been problems with teaching children to read and write. Whipton saw their best ever KS2 results of 42% combined, with 46% or higher predicted. This is still below the national level. The recent school review was positive. Whipton Barton have taken on board the Trust's primary common curriculum and now there is a rigorous knowledge rich curriculum. There is also a level of accountability and incremental coaching for staff. There is no poor teaching and behaviour is being tackled. The Education Scrutiny Panel (ESP) has toured the school and observed the good behaviour.</p> <p><i>We are conscious of the Trust's aspiration to help more primary schools. It feels important for the Trust taking on new primary schools that Whipton "gets there".</i> It definitely will. The children are beginning to get a good deal. There are raised aspirations and an enriched extra curriculum programme. The new Headteacher is doing very well. There had been a lack of physical resource and a period of turbulence which was fundamental in developing the future headteachers.</p> <p><i>It is encouraging to hear that progress is being made. How long do you think the process of intensive support will be? When will this be reduced to targeted support?</i> SM was confident that in September Whipton would no longer be on intensive support.</p> <p><i>Are St James and St Luke's, who receive most of the Whipton Barton children, able to provide support?</i> There are some key links between the schools. We are looking to appoint a family support worker across both schools and there is an opportunity for them to work in partnership. We need St Luke's and Whipton to be securely good schools for there to be more synergy. The secondary schools need to learn from the primary. The resources that have been put in are very much capacity on the ground. Secondary schools need to be clear on phonics teaching and that gaps are addressed during the transition. We need to ensure that the ESP looks through the right lens at the right time. Sidmouth College – Trustees were invited to attend the Sidmouth Induction event with all staff on 01.03.23. This is the same date as the Education Committee so this would need to be reviewed.</p> <p>Trust Charter - thanks were extended to CT and TG for their work with developing the Charter.</p> <p>Matford Brook Academy – now pushed back to July for completion. Any further delay would become more of a challenge.</p> <p><i>Alternate Provision (AP) – at what stage do Trustees get an update on this?</i> The resource and timeframe will be reviewed at Executive Off-site on 09.02.23. AP covers a wide range of children and a glossary of terms to tighten understanding is needed.</p>	
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Do we have a site in mind? There are opportunities for sites and an opportunity to look at strategies. We need a wider strategic understanding of the challenges. Commissioning places is also important to review and specialist provision also flows from this. Rob Diment has written a paper and work is ongoing on modelling before a final decision is made. **Action: circulate a copy of Rob Diment's report to Trustees for information.**

This is an identified need and is a major project for the Trust and will require specific agenda time. TF advised that ongoing projects would be RAG rated for Trustees to decide where more scrutiny was required.

Are there best practice examples? Yes, Simon Weir has visited Lime Academy. Currently the provision of places is through the Local Authority and there is a contract in place at significant cost. The vision is to commission from a smaller number of suppliers at a good cost for September 2023. A clear process is needed.

MM had recently presented to Trust Leaders on the Trust's MATSE experience and had offered to share the experience with anyone who is involved in one. TF had also presented to the Trust Governance Professionals network.

Attendance is a national issue, how is the strategy going and what schools are doing well? What are you learning from other schools? Noting that MAP parental engagement is positive? Primary schools are doing ok, there was 95.1% attendance overall for Primary this term. This is not yet as high as it should be. DS attendance was 93.3%. There is still a social justice aspect with pupils missing one day a fortnight on average.

Secondary attendance was 88.8% with FSM 86.2%. We are doing forensic work to look at this. Attendance is being managed differently internally, we have seen a 0.5% increase since the autumn term for secondary schools. The secondaries must do better. Compared to similar schools regionally we are doing well however a lot of work is required.

Leigh Withers presented on attendance strategies. How is that going? Attendance has been at 88% since 09.01.23 and they had not been above that since September previously. This is a good example of a healthy balance and the need to have systems and processes. There is further work to be done.

Parental relationships – work is being done on this. As part of strengthening communities, we are looking at minimal standards for building parental relationships. It is difficult to show an exact correspondence with attendance but anecdotally that is working. Schools will collectively agree what will be done across all schools. 28% of parents engaged with the parental survey across all schools. Often the ones who take part in the survey are not the ones with the barriers we are trying to reach.

Sport and extra-curricular activities are often drivers for attendance. Is there any evidence to support this in our schools and how is this going? Most schools are getting children involved in additional extra-curricular activity. The breadth of curriculum and the offer is strong. This came out strongly in the survey. There is a correlation between detention days and lower attendance. Local leaders need to know their schools.

SOM had attended the Inclusion & Social Justice Panel (ISJP) where they had talked about building community hubs and being more creative to welcome parents in. Other CEOs were speaking in similar ways.

MF

AM noted that the whole area around community hubs and engagement and school's being "anchor institutions" was an area of key strategic work for the Trust.

Why is there such a difference in attendance between primary and secondary? Particularly at MAP which shares a site and has the same community. As a parent, at primary they are young and need looking after. Some secondary school children are given more freedom. It is a national picture. The parental piece of work on understanding barriers to attendance is important. So, it is not authorised attendance? No, the only thing that counts towards that are children who have attended an alternative provision and are being educated off-site.

South West Opportunities Fund – the paperwork has been completed and submitted. There is an 8-week turnaround.

What work is going into the Ten Years of Ted and the Launch of the Trust's vision for the next 10 years? This will be looked at in detail and further defined at the away day on 29.03.23.

Growth Update – PB updated on the recent Growth & Development Committee. The Trust's due diligence and onboarding process had been reviewed, this was now a coherent document. A new key aspect was for Trustees to visit new schools before they come on board. It was agreed that this was a positive development.

As a Trust we are expanding more into rural areas, are we confident that the Trust Board is meeting the diversity needed? This is constantly under review and is the remit of the Chair and Clerk.

Safeguarding Group – Crispin had met with SM and Aimee Mitchell (AMi) to look at mapping safeguarding and flagging key issues i.e. children requiring mental health support from external agencies and not receiving it. The number of children requiring support from local authorities was very high. We are also looking to understand the safeguarding and mental health needs of children who were being excluded.

A full record of the discussion is in Part B of the minutes.

5. **LGB & Trust Board Update**

Appointments & Resignations

Matford Brook – it was noted that the applicants for the Matford Brook LGB were high quality.

Are there other governors lined up for the school who are not part of the original shadow board? We are actively recruiting to the LGB. LM had also proposed asking a governor from CEC to support Matford Brook for the first 12 months, particularly a parent governor. Staff and parent governor elections would not be undertaken straight away.

The new Governor appointments in the Trust were reviewed and agreed.

Alasdair Williams – Co-opted Governor, MAP Primary
Annette Codner – Staff Governor, MAP Secondary (appointed by election process)

Matford Brook

Tony Jordan
Carole Pilley
Catherine Gibaud

	<p>Rachel Higginson</p> <p>Andy Mulcock & Alex Walmsley had been reappointed as Foundation Trustees for a further term of four years from 12.02.23.</p> <p><u>LGB Chairs Group Update</u></p> <p>The meeting had been held on 01.02.23. There had been good engagement but more attendance would be preferable. Common themes were identified and there was a generally positive feeling. The Chairs understood the focus of their roles.</p> <p>Chairs were positive about the new data dashboard and health checks, however training was needed for governors to understand the data being presented to them. LM was in the process of arranging this with Jon Lunn.</p> <p>The level of parental engagement with the survey had also been highlighted and LGB's had been encouraged to engage with the responses.</p>	
6.	<p>Financial Update</p> <p>A report had been circulated in advance of the meeting. SP gave an overview of the Management Accounts and Cashflow which were both well managed and the Trust was in a strong position.</p> <p>A full record is in Part B of the Minutes.</p> <p><u>F&R Committee Update</u> – the volatility of the budget had been a key issue. Trustees appreciated the reliable and timely management information that was received.</p> <p>Fusion was a success story, providing additional income and better service to the schools. Trustees noted Alex Walmsley's positive work with Fusion and how well this had been led.</p> <p>Health & Safety – clarity was needed on what information would go to the Finance & Resources Committee in terms of Health & Safety reporting. There was a Trust Health & Safety Network and consideration needed to be given to appointing a Health & Safety Lead trustee to link into this. Action: Health & Safety Lead Trustee to be appointed to link to the Trust Health & Safety Network.</p>	All
7.	<p>QE Focus Group Update</p> <p>The Focus group had met to consider potential future options for QE.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Chair of the QE LGB should be involved in the focus group.</p> <p>Action: Invite the Chair of the QE LGB to join the QE Focus Group</p> <p>A full record of the discussion is in Part B of the Minutes.</p>	MF
8.	<p>School Admissions Policies 2024/25</p> <p>The proposed admissions policies for 2024/25 and feedback from the consultation had been circulated ahead of the meeting. TR outlined the key points for Trustees to note.</p>	

	<p>Children in all-through schools did not need to apply for a Year 7 place if they were in Year 6 in the same school. This would apply to Matford Brook and CEC.</p> <p>The CEC intake had reduced to 60. The second phase of development at CEC was due to be discussed.</p> <p>Exwick Heights – due to demographics there were only enough children for a 60 PAN.</p> <p>QE – the PAN was 210, this had been factored in to the one-site transition plan going forwards.</p> <p>Isca & West Exe – the PAN had been reduced due to Matford Brook being built, it would now be restored to offer parental choice. The Trust was confident that Matford Brook would have sufficient intake.</p> <p><i>Do our church schools meet the church school admission policy?</i> Yes, they do. This has been developed in conjunction with the Diocese. Changes were made last year.</p> <p>The School Admissions Policies and PAN amendments were Noted and Agreed.</p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p>Supported LGB Update (Whipton Barton)</p> <p>There had been a positive SLGB meeting on 08.02.23. Governors were starting to understand the school’s current position and challenges, and how they related to the Intensive Support Plan.</p> <p>New governor recruitment remained an issue. The school needed to be in a position for the SLGB to move away and to leave a strong LGB by the Autumn. This was a challenge.</p> <p>The school was very positive and everything was improving. Time was needed for the full improvement journey.</p> <p>Sarah O’Shea’s support with the SLGB was noted. Trustees requested that a card was sent to Sarah to thank her. Action: Thank you card to be sent to Sarah O’Shea to recognise her support with the Whipton Barton SLGB.</p> <p><i>Are the parents on board?</i> The parent survey showed areas for development that SLT would respond to. There had been criticism around the support for SEND children. A new SENCO and future head were now in place and this would improve rapidly. The parent governor was supportive of the Headteacher and was a helpful voice for the parents.</p>	<p>MF</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>Trust Policies for Approval</p> <p>Rapid compliance was needed across all areas. A policy audit had been undertaken. The focus until Easter was to ensure complete compliance across the Trust before the next phase of quality assurance.</p> <p><u>New Trust Policy Template</u> This had been circulated ahead of the meeting. Version amendments would be removed from the public facing policy. Signatures and the renewal date would also be removed as they were not a statutory requirement. There would be a robust system showing review date and delegation for all policies.</p> <p>Capability Policy – minor amendments. This was Approved subject to minor amendments.</p>	

	<p>Health & Safety Policy Statement – this was a temporary document and Julia Prince would be working on this further. It was noted that “Review at Audit & Risk Committee” needed to be added under Point 6. This was Approved subject to the required addition at Point 6.</p> <p>Equality Policy – TF confirmed that there were timelines against each objective under the Ted Wragg Charter. This was Approved.</p> <p><i>Should the ISJ Panel be involved in the review of the equality policy as there is reference to social and economic inequality?</i> LEM noted that this was a good point as, in a school context, some staff would come from the same backgrounds as the children. LEM confirmed that he would be happy to have a look at socio economic diversity in the workforce.</p> <p>It is important to ensure that these areas are structured in to our work and we are held to account. This would be appropriate as part of the Charter.</p> <p>Trustees extended their thanks to LM and her team for the recent work with the policy audit.</p>	
11.	<p>Procurement</p> <p>A summary document had been circulated ahead of the meeting for consideration by Trustees.</p> <p><u>Grounds Maintenance</u> – an interim contract for grounds maintenance had been awarded to two contractors (Countrywide Grounds & Maintenance for Exeter Schools and Aborcure Ltd for Plymouth Schools) following the current contractor going into administration. These were short term and the total value was £41k. SP confirmed that a full tender would be undertaken. This was Noted and Agreed.</p> <p><u>Catering</u> – a tender had been run for a number of Trust schools and the full evaluation report had been circulated.</p> <p>The recommendation was for the Primaries and New School (Whipton, Exwick & Matford Brook) to have a managed catering offer via Goosemoor. The Award of the Tender for Lot B to Goosemoor was agreed.</p> <p>The recommendation was for the Secondaries (CEC, ASAP and QE) to have a fully outsourced offer with Dolce. The Award of the Tender for Lot C to Dolce was agreed.</p> <p><u>ASAP Sports Hall</u> – Approval to take forward the proposed solution for sports facilities at ASAP was requested. A report had been circulated outlining the key points and setting out the proposed timeline. It was noted that further discussions with the YMCA were needed.</p> <p>The total cost for the project would be £2.4m, an offer letter had been received from DfE awarding £1.2m towards this.</p> <p>Consultants and a Project Manager needed to be appointed. It would be sensible to continue with Torbay Development Agency. SP had undertaken references. It was noted that the cost was close to the public contracts regulations where a full tender would be needed. However, single source arrangements could be agreed under certain circumstances as set out in the Trust’s competitive tendering policy.</p> <p><i>We can approve this under delegated authority. Are we safe that we will be under the threshold, is it a fixed price? We can be safe, there are other sub contracted elements that could be arranged separately, i.e. survey works.</i></p>	

	<p>Trustees approved the recommendation to award the contract for construction services to Torbay Development Agency, given the fixed price and urgency of the project.</p> <p><u>Energy Surveys</u> – these had been commissioned as part of the Trust’s energy efficiency work and were part of a larger piece of work to be completed before 31.03.23.</p> <p><u>Cleaning Tender</u></p> <p>AM, AW, RJ & SP left the meeting for this item due to being Directors of Fusion School Services Ltd who had submitted a tender.</p> <p>PB chaired the meeting for the item.</p> <p>The scoring matrix, tender outcome and recommendations had been circulated ahead of the meeting for non-conflicted Trustees to review.</p> <p>The tender process had been supported by Josie Medforth from PHP Law. Submissions were scored based on quality, price and commercial approach. Fusion School Services was the preferred provider at a total cost of £3,150,316.03 over the length of the contract.</p> <p>It was noted that ASAP and Lipson were not included in the tender due to already having arrangements in place.</p> <p><i>Were Devon Norse not invited to bid?</i> Devon Norse were part of the tender, they had registered on the tender portal and attended the virtual Q&A session but decided not to submit a tender. They had noted that they had experienced difficulty staffing the service at CEC and this had deterred them from tendering.</p> <p><i>Why was the tender from Ecoserve discounted?</i> Ecoserve had submitted an abnormally low bid which was based on the current staffing model. The recommendation from PHP was to reject this bid, in accordance with the procurement regulation in relation to abnormally low bids. This is not risk free as they may content the outcome.</p> <p><i>What happens if someone does challenge the outcome?</i> We would be advised by PHP. The 10-day standstill period is when this is likely to occur.</p> <p>Trustees were confident that there had been no related party involvement in the tender.</p> <p>Trustees approved the recommendation to award the tender to Fusion School Services at a total cost of £3,150,316.03 over the length of the contract.</p>	
Any Other Business		
	<p>SP, AW, AM & RJ returned to the meeting at 18:35</p> <p>Trustee Football Evening 18.04.23 – Trustees would need to pay for their own tickets. Action: MF to send an email with details and to confirm numbers.</p> <p>Exeter College Ofsted – Trustees to send a letter to Exeter College to congratulate them on their Outstanding Ofsted result. Action: MF to send a letter on behalf of Trustees.</p> <p>Attendance at Meetings – AM noted the value of Trustee attendance at Panels and the need to ensure that at least two trustees were present at each meeting. Trustees were reminded to give as much notice as possible if they were unable to attend future meetings to allow for a replacement to be arranged.</p>	<p>MF</p> <p>MF</p>

<p>Away Day – 29.09.23 at Buckfast Abbey. More details to follow.</p> <p>Trust Leadership Conference – 19.05.23. There was an open invite to Trustees that had been circulated by MF.</p> <p>The meeting closed at: 18:44</p> <p>Date of Next Meetings: Weds 29 March 2023 (Away Day) – Buckfast Abbey (times TBC) Weds 24 May 2023, 4.30pm Weds 12 July 2023 (Conference) – Time TBC</p>	
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Signed by the Chair of the Board:

Signed electronically on Governor Hub

Date: 29.03.23

Final