Board of Trustees

Wednesday 16 October 2024, 4.45pm
Great Moor House, Exeter

Attended:

Andy Mulcock (AM) - Chair	**Philip Bostock (PB) – Vice Chair**
James Frampton (JF)	**Teresa Gardner (TG)**
Richard Jacobs (RJ)	**Moira Marder (MM) – CEO**
Jade Otty (JO)	**Crispin Taylor (CT)**
Alex Walmsley (AW)	
In Attendance	
Melody Floyde (MF) – Trust Governance Coordinator	**Lorraine Mitchell (LM) – Head of Governance**
Tamsin Frances (TF) – Executive Director Item 13 only	**Tim Rutherford (TR) – Deputy Chief Executive**

Apologies:

Ben Manning (BM) **Lee Elliot-Major (LEM)** **Sarah O'Meara (SOM)**

Meeting Minutes

Item No.	Business	Action
1.	**Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest** AM welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from SOM, LEM and BM. Declarations of interest were noted, as follows: AW: Director, First Federation Trust & Member of Diocesan Education Group AW, RJ, AM: Directors, Fusion School Services Ltd JO: Vice Principal, Exeter College	
2.	**Minutes of Previous Meeting, Update on Actions and Matters Arising** The minutes of the meeting held on 10.07.24 were approved as a full and accurate record. All actions were recorded as complete.	
3.	**Confirmation of Trust Chair & Vice Chair** It was agreed that AM would continue as Chair and PB as Vice Chair for 2024-25. Trustees extended thanks to AM and PB for their support and hard work in the roles over the past year.	

4.	**LGB & Trust Board Update** LGB Appointments & Resignations It was noted that LM would be leaving the Trust on 31.10.24 to take up another role. Thanks were extended to Lorraine for her hard work and ongoing support over the years. LM was appointed as the new Chair of Isca Academy LGB, she would also take up a temporary co-opted governor role to support the Matford Brook LGB this academic year. **Trustees reviewed and approved the proposed Governor appointments.** It was noted that recruitment had been strong and that most LGBs were now full or had the minimum number of governors appointed. *Trustees noted that the appointment of the Headteacher at Exeter Cathedral School to the Foundation Governor role at St Luke's was very positive.* **Action: Formally confirm all Governor Appointments subject to completion of all checks.** Trust Board The updated constitution for 2024-25 was circulated. Trustees noted that CT would be stepping down as a Trustee/ Safeguarding Lead at the end of the autumn term. Thanks were extended to CT for all his work and support over the years. TG had volunteered to take on the Safeguarding Link Trustee role in the interim until a new suitably skilled Trustee was appointed. **This was agreed.** Trustees noted that the Trust Safeguarding Team had developed very positively over the years and that the audit process was now well-established. AM would be meeting a potential Trustee with SEND experience on 25.10.24. Work was continuing to build a pool of potential Trustee candidates to further strengthen the Board. It was noted that the Education Committee would benefit from trustees with education backgrounds particularly primary and secondary. It was also suggested that a colleague from a Health organisation could be co-opted to the role of "critical friend".	 **MF**
5.	**Policies for Approval** Trustees reviewed and approved the following policy: • **Trust Safeguarding Statement** **Action: Trust Safeguarding Policy to be published.**	 **MF**

6.	**Financial Update** AW gave an update on the Finance & Resources Committee meeting held on 25.09.24 There had been a surplus in Month 12 from provisions that had been built into the accounts over the year. Additional capital reserves had been released at year end. It had been agreed that these amounts would not be put aside in the future. Fusion School Services had made a £275k surplus which had been paid back to the schools. It had been agreed that this would be paid back to schools monthly next year. The opening grant for Matford Brook had been carried forward. Trustees noted the flux in the accounts and the ongoing risks. They also reflected on the potential nature of future risk for the Trust, including the Government potentially increasing National Insurance contributions from employers, it was unclear if this would be funded. It was confirmed that the Trust was in a good financial position, with reserves predicted to be within the agreed range of 4-7%, although a loss at year end was currently being budgeted for. However, this was expected to improve in subsequent years. Trustees extended thanks to the Finance Team and noted Liam Dingle's solid work on the finances. The transition to the new CFO had been well-managed.	
7.	**Chief Executive Officer's Report** MM gave an overview of key priorities and areas of development. Results had been very positive. KS2 results were particularly strong for disadvantaged (DS) students. The positive work of the primary school improvement function was noted as a contributory factor to this. Whipton and CEC had outperformed in all metrics. KS4 outcomes were pleasing. Progress 8 scores were largely as expected. It was noted that there would be no Progress 8 for two years so attainment would be the focus. Lipson and St Luke's had done very well with DS children and were likely to be in the top performing schools in the region for their context. Exeter schools had made positive progress. QE would have another good year. Trustees requested an update on Trust-wide DS results at the next meeting. **Action: An update on DS results for the Trust to be added to the agenda for the December meeting.** There were still challenges at some schools where additional support plans were in place. KS5 results were not currently a strength for the Trust. Sarah Parsons, Director of Education, would be leading on the Trust Sixth Form Strategy.	**MF**

There was a feeling of uncertainty in the Education sector. changes to Ofsted and curriculum were due and a national plan for SEND was also expected. Any investment of time and support needed to impact upon children in a positive way. TWT should drive this piece of work forwards into the next academic year.

Matt Bindon's work to develop higher quality Tier 2 provision in the Trust was noted. The reduction in the number of suspensions compared to the same time last year was positive.

The positive involvement of the Trust's Executive Leaders in wider sector work was also noted.

Trustees noted that extra-curricular activities and sport could be important factors in getting students motivated to attend school. They noted the recent work at Matford Brook around belonging and requested future updates on these areas of work. It was agreed that this would be celebrated more, and updates provided to Trustees. It would also be important to look at ways of resourcing these opportunities for students to ensure the maximum uptake.

Some Trustees had attended recent Trust School open mornings. The focus on the whole school approach and the importance of engaging the children and the whole family were very important aspects for schools. Consistency over time was key. MM noted that she would be presenting on the Trust's cradle to career work at the CST Conference and would share information with Trustees.

<u>Trust Charter</u>

A report had been produced on the Ted Wragg Charter and key points were highlighted. Training was being held on 18.10.24. It was agreed to add the Ted Wragg Charter to the agenda as a standing item for future Board meetings.

Action: Add Ted Wragg Charter to the Agenda for future Board Meetings — **MF**
Action: Circulate the Ted Wragg Charter Report to Trustees — **MF**

There were no further questions.

<u>Growth</u>

PB gave an overview from the Growth & Development Committee on 03.10.24.

<u>Matford Brook (MBA)</u>

Trustees noted that MBA was still an area for concern and recognised that staff were working hard to move this forward. It was noted that MBA would be on the risk register and that the Audit & Risk Committee would look at this in detail at the next meeting.

The novel temporary buildings were due to be ready in November and would provide sufficient capacity for two years. No further formal information had been received from DfE.

<u>Exmouth Community College (ECC)</u>

ECC was due to be tabled at the Advisory Board on 21.10.24 for approval.

	<u>QE Update</u> The masterplan and the decision of the school adjudicator had been circulated. This had been discussed at Growth & Development Committee in detail. A full record of the discussion is in Part B of the minutes.	
8.	**External Governance Review and Temporary Governance Structure** The scope for the review had been sent to three providers to invite them to tender. Presentations to Trustees had been booked for 22.11.24. **It was agreed that PB, AM and JF would sit on the tender panel** <u>Temporary Governance Structure</u> TWT was looking to recruit a new Head of Governance and would be putting out an advert. In the interim time support would be provided from within the existing Governance team. Trustees noted that LM was a huge loss to the Trust and the vacancy was a significant risk to the Trust going forwards until a replacement was found.	
9.	**Education Committee** JO gave an update from the Education Committee and Education Scrutiny Panel (ESP). The ESP had been held at Tor Bridge School. The tour of the school with the new Headteacher had been very positive. The Trust Directors of Education had attended to talk about their roles. Trustees had asked questions about capacity and the common approach being taken by the Directors. Trustees had noted that SP, who was new to role, had been allocated two schools receiving intensive support. Three schools were currently receiving intensive support for different reasons. The data dashboard had been scrutinised and challenged. Attendance remained challenging but was increasing. The Trust was slightly below national average for secondary but working on this. A presentation on the Trust's sixth Form strategy had provided reassurance on TWT moving to develop mechanisms to run strong sixth forms. The KS5 outcomes were currently not good enough. The panel agreed that there was a place for well run sixth forms within the Trust. Trustees noted the positive impact of JO chairing the Education Committee and ESP. Three non-executives attended the ESP and had contributed positively to the meetings. The importance of increasing Trustee attendance on the Education Committee and ESP was noted.	

	A full record of the discussion is in Part B of the minutes	
Items for Information		
10.	**Safeguarding Policy Template (Schools)** The school safeguarding policy template had been approved by the Senior Executive and was shared with Trustees for information.	
11.	**Academy Trust Handbook 2024** The Academy Trust Handbook and Accounting Officer letter were shared for information. It was noted that the Finance & Resources Committee had reviewed the changes in detail.	
12.	**Term Dates 2025-26** The school term dates for 2025-26 were noted.	
Any Other Business		
	AW, AM and RJ left the meeting at 18:30 JF left the meeting at 18:30 **Date of Next Meeting:** Wednesday 11 December 2024	
Non-Fusion Trustees Only		
13.	**Catering Provision for PFI Schools** AW, AM, RJ were not present for this item due to being Directors of Fusion. PB Chaired the meeting for this item. Tamsin Frances was in attendance to present the proposal to Trustees. Trustees reviewed and considered the recommendations for the catering provision for PFI schools to be a hybrid arrangement between Fusion Schools Services and a managed provider. Trustees were supportive of the recommendation and noted the positive opportunity this presented for the schools. **Trustees agreed with the recommendation to tender for a Hybrid Catering Provision for Exeter PFI Schools between Fusion Schools Services and a Managed Provider.** TF confirmed that the tender scope and invitation would be sent out on 17.10.24. The ESFA would need to be notified due to the related party transaction element of the contract.	

Meeting closed at: 18:45

Signed by the Chair of the Board:
Signed electronically via Governor Hub
Date: 11.12.2024