

## Board of Trustees

Wednesday 16 February 2022, 4.30pm  
Microsoft Teams (Virtual Meeting)

**Attended:**

Andy Mulcock (AM) - Chair	Philip Bostock (PB) – Vice Chair
James Frampton (JF)	Lindsay Hetherington (LH)
Richard Jacobs (RJ)	Ben Manning (BM)
Moira Marder (MM)	Sarah O’Meara (SO)
Saxon Spence (SS)	Crispin Taylor (CT)
Alex Walmsley (AW)	
Charlotte Davies – Director of Business & Operations (CD)	Sue Pym – Director of Finance (SP)
Jon Lunn – Director of Education Performance (JL)	Tim Rutherford (TR) – Deputy CEO

**In Attendance:**

Melody Floyde (MF) – Clerk to the Trust
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**Apologies:**

Lee Elliot Major (LEM) Teresa Gardner (TG)
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## Meeting Minutes

Item No.	Business	Action
1.	<p><b>Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>AM welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Lee Elliot-Major (LEM) and Teresa Gardner (TG).</p> <p>Welcome to James Frampton (JF) who was joining as a Co-opted Trustee. JF had been the Chair of St James LGB and is a Partner at Michelmores Solicitors. A round of introductions was undertaken.</p> <p>Declarations of interest were noted, as follows:            AW: Director, First Federation Trust.            LH: Head of Initial Teacher Training, Exeter University <b>(Item 13)</b>            AW, RJ, AM, CD: Directors, Fusion School Services <b>(Item 13)</b>            PB: Associate Governor (Honorary), Exeter College <b>(Item 13)</b></p>	

2.	<p><b>Minutes of Previous Meeting and Update on Actions.</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 08.12.21 were approved as a full and accurate record.</p> <p>All actions were recorded as complete except TB0812.10 which would be actioned once Lorraine Mitchell the Head of Corporate Governance was in post.</p>	
3.	<p><b>Matters Arising</b></p> <p>None</p>	
4.	<p><b>Appointments &amp; Resignations</b></p> <p><u>Trustee Appointments</u></p> <p>James Frampton was appointed as a Co-opted Governor (subject to DBS). MF confirmed that approval had been received from the Members.</p> <p>The recent LGB appointments and resignations were noted and ratified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liz Partridge, Staff Governor, CEC</li> <li>• Kelly David, Co-Opted Governor, MAP Primary</li> <li>• Tina Brinkworth, Co-opted Governor, MAP Primary</li> <li>• Steven Medlin, Co-opted Governor, MAP Primary</li> <li>• Kate King, Parent Governor, St Luke’s</li> <li>• Andrew Stiles, Co-opted Governor, St Luke’s</li> <li>• Trish Harrogate, Parent Governor, Isca</li> <li>• Kerra Maddern, Co-opted Governor, Whipton Barton</li> <li>• Daniel Simpson, Parent Governor, QE</li> </ul> <p>The transfer of the Lipson Academy Governors into the Trust from 01.01.22 was approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kevin Bishop (Chair)</li> <li>• Helen Morris (Vice Chair)</li> <li>• Stuart Koehler-Lewis</li> <li>• Lucie Garland</li> </ul> <p>SOM noted the recent help received from the Trust to recruit Governors. It had made a huge difference to LGBs.</p>	

**Items For Monitoring**

5.	<p><b>Financial Update</b></p> <p>SP had circulated the December Management Accounts and confirmed that January was well underway.</p> <p>With the conversion of Lipson Academy, the Trust was now looking towards a £70m turnover per annum. There were several new grants which would need to be monitored carefully. In particular the Education Recovery Funding, School Led Tutoring and others attached to Covid. SP confirmed that expenditure would be fully accounted for in line with the terms and conditions of the grants.</p> <p>Grants were also being received in relation to Plymouth including Connect the Classroom and money for focussed support.</p>	
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	<p><b>A full record of the discussion is in Part B of the Minutes.</b></p> <p>AM noted the Trustees’ appreciation of SP’s hard work with the finances.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p><b>Chief Executive Officers Report</b></p> <p>MM reported that it had been a positive half-term.</p> <p>Covid – had come in waves and it had been difficult for some of the schools. Schools had dealt well with, in some cases, over 30% staff absence. The children’s experience of learning had not been disrupted and the staff at the schools had worked together to ensure there was cover. There were still challenges, however the situation was improving.</p> <p>Attendance – The Trust focus going forwards needed to be on attendance and getting children into school needed to be a priority. This had been discussed in the Social Justice &amp; Inclusion Panel and was an area for investment.</p> <p>The Levelling Up White Paper would benefit the Plymouth Schools.</p> <p>The Schools White Paper was awaited and should be clearer by the away day. TWMAT had been invited to work alongside other schools to look at the future for schools in Devon, working together for the good of all children in Devon. The Trust was showing Leadership around this. MM noted two papers that had been circulated to Trustees. There was a desire to work with the Local Authority to look at how to work together in a professional joined up way rather than in silos.</p> <p>MM felt that TWMAT could be a Civic Leader for the areas we serve and this would be worth further discussion.</p> <p>JL noted the new dashboard that gave weekly checks for attendance. January had been challenging, one of the secondaries had been below the national average but had increased again this week. JL was also optimistic that the Covid wave had passed and that this would improve after half-term.</p> <p>SOM noted the investments for future headteachers and asked for further information on who they were and if gaps had been identified for them. MM confirmed that the Trust’s reserves were being used creatively to recruit leaders ahead of time to be trained and immersed in the Trust culture, so they were ready to lead in one of the Trust Schools. This was a very positive development for the Trust. TR noted the hypothesis that headteachers were the most important in the Trust’s structure and confirmed that these were future headteachers rather than headteacher designates. The hope was to recruit future headteachers internally. The Trust was striving for excellence locally with investment in leaders, starting with Heads and the moving into Inclusion and SEND. This linked with the Trust’s strategic intent and values. MM noted the work with some of the best Trusts in the country and accessing best practice outside of Devon. The Trust wanted the very best people. TR added that the Headteacher position at Matford Brook Academy was likely to be advertised as a vacancy soon.</p> <p>PB noted the civic model from the CST and stated that, in a way, the Trust was ahead of the game due to relationships with a number of partners. It would be positive to articulate and codify these in some way to show how the Trust worked. He noted the complications of working with the local government structure in Devon along with other educational institutions. There was potential for a wider ranging partnership working together for the</p>	

	<p>common ground. It was important to demonstrate and articulate the public benefit that the Trust brings. MM would like to explore this further at the Away Day.</p> <p>RJ queried if the future leaders initiative was replicated in other Trusts. TR noted that this was unknown as the information was not widely published and there was not a model, however the Trust was sharing the idea with others. Investment was needed in future Heads for the region as a whole. RJ noted the positivity of sharing best practice.</p> <p>SS felt that the former Education authorities were key, the idea of place and getting everyone on board was important. SS queried how the new Secretary of State for Education viewed schools and if they were expected to join MATs. MM noted that this was anticipated in the white paper, but it was unclear if there would be a timeframe put on this. The challenge in Devon was that there was not a lot of strong Trusts so there was potential for external Trusts to come into the area. There were likely to be financial incentives for schools to join Trusts. There could be challenging times ahead.</p> <p>AM echoed this message from meetings he had attended with Chairs of other Trusts.</p> <p>AM queried if any Ofsted visits were expected in Trust schools. MM confirmed that early inspections had been requested for MAP Secondary and MAP Primary. These should happen by the end of the academic year. As a result of the Covid delays we expect section 5 inspections for 2022-23 in QE, Whipton Juniors and a section 8 inspection at Isca.</p> <p>RJ felt that engagement with the business community would be beneficial and could encourage others to become Trustees or Governors. MM was presenting to the Devon and Plymouth Chamber of Commerce this would be an opportunity to share information about the Trust and to connect with businesses.</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p><b>Committee Updates</b></p> <p>AW joined the meeting at 5.10pm</p> <p><u>Audit &amp; Risk</u>          RJ updated that the Committee had been working well together. There had been a good meeting with potential auditors.</p> <p>Ben McGowan, Head of Digital and IT gave a presentation on Cyber Security which was a large risk to the Trust. RJ noted that one of the potential auditors had a specialist cyber security team which the Trust could utilise.</p> <p>Estates would be a future focus for the Committee.</p> <p><u>Finance &amp; Resources Committee</u></p> <p>AW noted the Trust’s approach of budgeting cautiously and looking to improve. It was looking like a good year with investment in the Trust as desired. There was strong financial management in the Trust and the accounts showed a strong picture.</p> <p>The School Resource Management Checklist had been reviewed, this was a useful aide memoire for the committee. The need for Trust websites to be consistent and to show a fully informative picture of the leadership structures within schools had been identified.</p> <p>Trustees had also asked to see the Trust Marketing Strategy. <b>Action: Arrange for Emma Darke to give an update on the Trust’s Marketing Strategy at a future meeting.</b></p>	<p>MF</p>

Procurement thresholds were more frequently being hit, and related party transactions were becoming more frequent.

The PFI contract had finally been signed off and a big thank you was extended to everyone who had been involved. AM echoed thanks to AW for his work with the PFI work.

SS noted uncertainty about the Trust's Gender pay gap report and also concern that it was becoming more difficult to recruit TAs and felt that this area required some attention.

SP noted that the executive pay report and gender pay gap were statutory requirements. Due to the number of roles in education support that were attractive to women, through lifestyle choice, there were a lot of women in those groups. SS noted the need to recognise that there would be pressure on certain areas of work with the employment becoming more difficult. The roles needed to be made more attractive. SP noted that the pay award for that group of staff had not been settled and there was struggle to recruit with the unstable pay structure. TR also noted limitations in retaining the staff. It was likely a more radical review of the pay policy would be needed to benefit staff at all levels. SS also noted it was important to look at career progression in those roles and not just teaching.

TR noted the school business professional apprenticeship which would help to develop staff at all levels.

MM also confirmed that a people strategy was being developed for the Trust to ensure it was a good employer. This would be a large piece of work and would be prioritised in the next year.

SS queried if the pension situation would lead to the same situation as was facing universities. SP confirmed that when the re-evaluated pension scheme was received in a year's time there would be some capping but that this was unclear at the moment. LH noted that the Teacher and University pensions did appear to work differently. AW noted the need to be agile in budgeting when the changes came through.

#### Chairs Governance Committee

PB gave an update on the meeting. This had been an additional meeting due to the fast-moving situation.

The Chairs had spoken about having a more developed strategic plan and ideas to talk about on the Away Day on 30.03.22.

**A full record is in Part B of the Minutes.**

**LH left the meeting at 17:40**

Education Scrutiny Panel – SOM had found this a very valuable meeting and felt it was taking things to a new level. Having the external scrutiny was very valuable and provided challenge to the schools and the Trust. The panel would have a huge impact on the Trust's effectiveness.

Social Justice & Inclusion Panel – SS echoed SOM's points. It had been a lengthy detailed meeting. There had been interesting discussion about exclusions and fixed term exclusions would now be called suspensions. It was good to see that the Trust had teams to work with

	<p>children and families. There were detailed presentations from three schools and this was worthwhile to share good practice.</p> <p>AW queried if the minutes would be available. MF confirmed that these would be received and circulated ahead of the Education Committee.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p><b>Feedback from LGB Chairs Group</b></p> <p>There had been a positive conversation with the LGB Chairs. Engagement was good.</p> <p>Concern about recruitment and retention of staff had been voiced by several of the Chairs. They were reassured by the Trust’s response.</p> <p>Chairs wanted governance to feel in person as much as possible. Some felt that it had become mechanistic. Others felt that the paperwork was very valuable but overwhelming in volume. Hopefully this would develop over time.</p> <p>LGBs were engaged. They had questions about what to expect in relation to Ofsted and this could be built into future engagement with the Chairs.</p> <p>Chairs had noted that the recent recruitment of governors had been positive.</p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p><b>Future Strategic Development</b></p> <p>The Away Day on 30.03.22 would be an opportunity to think about self-evaluation and the strategic direction of the Trust.</p> <p>AM asked for input on what Trustees would like to raise either at the Away Day or in the future.</p> <p>AM felt that it was important to be aware of diversity and being sensitive about this. The Trust should be pragmatic in the way forward.</p> <p>SS felt that issue of public relations was important. There was likely to be negative perceptions of MATs so it was important to present the positive aspects. The way this was communicated was important.</p> <p>RJ noted the Trust’s capacity for expansion and how the Trust would be structured as it grew. It was important to consider how the Centre would look in five years’ time. CT agreed that there needed to be corporate resources and infrastructure to support any planned expansion.</p> <p>JF raised provision for SEND students. As the Trust grew there were more pupils with SEND and extra needs. It was important to be inclusive, but this also needed to be strategic through all round provision and looking at what the Trust could do. SOM also noted issues with supporting EAL students and queried if there was any support within the Trust.</p> <p>BM would like to explore the Trust’s civic responsibilities and the current and future position. It would also be positive to have self-assessment of the Trust Board, potentially through 360° appraisals.</p> <p>Safeguarding – both specific to Covid and not. This was a national theme that the Trust needed to be conscious of and how to invest in this. CT noted the helpful thoughts around</p>	

	<p>SEND and Safeguarding needs in CYP. Both areas were experiencing exponential increases in demand.</p> <p>MM noted that, when preparing for growth, the Trust could not just copy a model. There was not a one size fits all for what the centre should look like. It was important to be agile and adapt depending on the challenges being faced. She agreed that it would be useful to talk about this but that it would not be easy.</p> <p>MM noted the recent SEN conference which had been very helpful and had looked at how to raise the profile of special needs across the Trust. It was important to ensure that all students had access to an aspirant curriculum.</p> <p>MM stated that if there was a special school who needed to join a MAT this would enhance the Trust and would allow us to do something exceptional. It was good to have this on the radar.</p> <p>It was agreed that preparing for growth was a priority.</p> <p>TR added that this was the tenth year of the Trust and the history must be appreciated. AM noted the opportunities this presented in promoting the story of the Trust and this being understood.</p> <p>The Away Day should focus on the big picture, strategy and long-term views.</p>	
<p>10.</p>	<p><b>Staff Survey</b></p> <p>TR gave a presentation on headlines from the first all staff survey which was undertaken in May 2021. <b>Action: Presentation and Visual to be circulated with the Minutes.</b></p> <p>It was important to note that Primary school staff were generally more positive than secondary staff and that the Trust was secondary dominated. Collaboration had been high.</p> <p>The work on developing a people strategy was important to ensure that staff felt connected with leadership. Work was also needed on developing the Trust community.</p> <p>It was a disappointment that Trust values were not being embedded. TR confirmed that work was being done on this and he would be talking to another Trust who had done this successfully.</p> <p>There were opportunities to improve. This year's survey would launch on 25 April 2022.</p> <p>A student survey was also planned for Year 5+ to be launched in January.</p> <p>AW noted that the areas of weakness did not appear difficult to resolve and appeared to be around communication. TR agreed that this had not been addressed proactively and information could be communicated in a better way going forward.</p> <p>SOM noted it also depended on what stage of the journey the school was at. There was an aspect of some schools feeling done to which could have an impact.</p> <p>SOM noted that St James had a 26% response rate compared to 74% at Whipton and asked how this could be improved to get staff engaged and ensure that they felt heard. TR noted that the surveys were done by email address so the results needed to be taken in context and used to create hypotheses.</p>	<p><b>MF</b></p>



	<p>SOM noted the value of the School Trust Open Mornings and encouraged other Trustees to attend.</p> <p><b>Action: MF to share the videos that MM had made for staff.</b></p>	<b>MF</b>
<b>Items for Approval</b>		
11.	<p><b>Appointment of External Auditors</b></p> <p>SP noted that it was a requirement of the Academy Trust Handbook for Trust's to retender for External Auditors every five years. SP confirmed that this was ultimately a Members' appointment.</p> <p>The Audit &amp; Risk Committee had met as an evaluation panel on 09.03.22 to watch presentations from three potential suppliers.</p> <p><b>A full record is in Part B of the Minutes</b></p> <p>LH rejoined the meeting at 18:20</p>	
12.	<p><b>Agreement of Admissions Policies 2023-24</b></p> <p>The proposed admissions policies for 2023-24 for all schools had been circulated.</p> <p>CD confirmed that the public consultation process had been undertaken and the policies updated accordingly by Andrew Brent at DCC in discussion with the Diocese. There were some reductions in PAN.</p> <p>Some points for consideration in 2024 had also been summarised.</p> <p>TR noted the support received from Christina Mabin at the Diocese of Exeter with the admissions policies particularly with ASAP.</p> <p><b>Trustees approved the School Admission Policies for 2023-24.</b></p>	
13.	<p><b>Related Party Transactions</b></p> <p><u>Exeter University Teacher Training</u></p> <p>LH left the meeting for this discussion.</p> <p>SP noted the Trust's intention to develop a locally based teacher training provision to engage with South West Teacher Training (SWTT). As SWTT was part of the Trust, the University was a related party in this context.</p> <p>SP confirmed that all ITT providers needed to be reaccredited this year. Until now SWTT had used Bath Spa for the awarding of the accreditation. They would prefer to use Exeter University due to the geographical location. The Board were requested to run through the ESFA checklist for consideration. SP was seeking authority for single source approval rather than going through a competitive process due to the University's charitable status and this being a strategic partnership.</p> <p>SP noted that this was a future potential transaction, and that the new arrangements would start in September 2024 but recruitment would be undertaken in advance. Agreement was being sought to authorise SP to seek ESFA approval to develop a formal "at cost" proposal.</p>	



**Trustees agreed to SP seeking ESFA Approval to develop a formal “at cost” proposal for ITT with the University of Exeter.**

CT and RJ left the meeting at 6.30pm

Fusion School Services

AM, RJ, CD, AW left the meeting for this discussion. PB Chaired the meeting.

SP requested Trustees to consider the invitation of Fusion School Services to tender for the supply of cleaning services to Trust Schools, whilst noting that Fusion was a wholly owned subsidiary. SP confirmed that support had been procured for the tender process from the South West School Buying Hub. An independent evaluation team had been established and the tenders would be independently evaluated. The Fusion bid would be at Cost.

**Trustees gave approval for the consideration of Fusion School Services being invited to tender for the provision of cleaning services to Trust Schools.**

Exeter College

PB left the meeting for this discussion.

SP noted that ESFA approval had not yet been received for the provision of Apprenticeships at cost via Exeter College. New approval was required due to the contract start date being March 2022 rather than January 2022.

This was also the same for HR Strategic Advice which would now start on 1 March 2022.

Approval was sought from Trustees for approval for both intended transactions starting on 1 March 2022.

**Trustees agreed to the Trust obtaining a quote for provision of HR Strategic Advice from Exeter College on the basis of at cost provision from 1 March 2022.**

**Trustees agreed to the provision of Apprentice Training from Exeter College from 1 March 2022.**

AW noted the situation where a wholly owned subsidiary of the Trust (Fusion) was being treated as a related party transaction. This did not feel logical.

CD noted that, within the approval letter from the ESFA, it explicitly stated that approval was needed for any change or renewal to the main contract. Fusion was proceeding with caution on that basis. Negotiations would continue with the ESFA to reach agreement that there was no conflict of interest with the subsidiary.

14.	<p><b>Governance Meeting Dates 2022-23</b></p> <p>The proposed Governance Meeting Dates for 2022-23 were circulated. <b>These were agreed.</b></p> <p>MF confirmed that the Governance Conference planned for 06.07.22 would move to 13.07.22 to avoid clashing with the South-West Leaders Conference.</p> <p><b>Action: MF to advise Jaime Corp of the agreed Governance Meeting Dates for 2023-24.</b></p>	MF
<b>Items for Information</b>		
15.	<p><b>Connect the Classroom Grant</b></p> <p>This had been agreed outside of the meeting by email and recorded on a decision log.</p>	
<b>Any Other Business</b>		
	<p><u>Move to Governor Hub</u></p> <p>MF updated Trustees on the proposed move away from Board Effect to Governor Hub for all Trust Governance meetings. This was being rolled out across the Trust and would be adopted by all LGBs.</p> <p><u>Annual Report 2020-21</u> – had now been published on the Trust website, and printed copies were due soon. <b>Action: MF to circulate the link for the Annual Report to Trustees.</b></p> <p><u>CEO Performance Management</u> – AM confirmed that this had taken place and that the Board were happy with MM’s performance.</p> <p>The meeting closed at: 6.42pm</p> <p><b>Dates of Next Meetings:</b> Wednesday 30 March 2022 – Away Day</p>	MF

Signed by the Chair of the Board:



Date: 25.05.22