

Board of Trustees
Wednesday 13 May 2020
Virtual Meeting via Google Meet

Item Ref	Meeting Summary Information
	List of actions from the meeting
2.	TR to provide feedback on two-week half term, following consultation with parent forum.
2.	TR to provide Provisional Term Dates for 2020/21 at next Board Meeting on 01.07.20.
6.	TR to send West Exe Safeguarding Report to MF for circulation.
6.	TR to write one page summary to accompany the Safeguarding Audit Report. MF to circulate.
6.	MM to obtain clarification on the legal position of Trustees when meeting with PHP Law on 15.05.20.
AOB	MF to arrange retirement card and flowers for Tania Beard from the Board.
	List of decisions taken at the meeting
	None

Board of Trustees

Wednesday 13 May 2020, 4.30pm

Attended:

Rob Bosworth – Chair (RB)
 David Hall (DH)
 Richard Jacobs (RJ)
 Beccy Mitchell (RM)
 Sarah O’Meara (SO)
 Crispin Taylor (CT)

Philip Bostock (PB)
 Moira Marder (MM)
 Andy Mulcock (AM)
 Saxon Spence (SS)
 Alex Walmsley (AW)

Charlotte Davies – Director of Finance
 Jon Lunn (JL)
 Sue Pym – Chief Accountant (SP)
 Melody Floyd - Clerk (MF)

Alison Layton-Hill, Director of Communications (ALH)
 Tim Rutherford (TR)

Meeting Minutes

Item Ref	Business	Action
1.	<p>Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest</p> <p>Due to the ongoing Covid-19 situation, this meeting was held virtually using Google Meet.</p> <p>Apologies were received from Lee Elliot Major (LEM).</p> <p>RB made a declaration of interest as Vice Principal of Exeter College in relation to sixth form provision at a potential new Trust school.</p> <p>RB extended his thanks to the Executive Team who have been doing a fantastic job in the current situation.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of Previous meetings</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 15.04.20 were approved as a full and accurate record.</p> <p>MM confirmed that feedback on the two week half-term would be obtained from the Parent Forum. This is work in progress and TR will provide details and also dates for next year to the next Board Meeting. Action to be carried forward to 01.07.20.</p>	MF/TR
3.	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>There were no additional matters arising.</p>	

4.	<p>Appointments & Resignations</p> <p>It was noted that Emma Slaven, Staff Governor at Exwick Heights, had resigned. Emma has been offered the Headship post at St Leonards Primary School.</p>	
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Monitoring		
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5.	<p>General Update</p> <p><u>Governance in Lockdown</u></p> <p>RB confirmed the importance of continuing with high quality governance during the current period and extended thanks to the Trustees for their commitment. It is important to continue scrutinising and challenging during the current situation, and encouraged Trustees to do so.</p> <p><u>Whipton Update</u></p> <p>SOM gave an update on her work with Whipton Barton LGB. The financial position had improved greatly due to the large amount of work from everybody. Also Gary Read’s leadership during the current Covid-19 situation has been fantastic. He has come into his own during this time. SOM noted that Gary approaches things with creativity and is motivating to staff meaning that everyone at the school is working well together. SOM noted the very turbulent and unsettled time for Primary Schools, but that Gary is a calming influence and is getting staff on board.</p> <p>Questionnaires have been sent to parents, and the feedback received has been very positive, with parents feeling very supported by the school.</p> <p>MM agreed that leadership has been great across the whole Trust, in terms of civic and community leadership, and that Gary is a great example of this.</p> <p>RB extended the Board’s thanks to SOM for her support with the Whipton LGB and for being the link Trustee. RB has written to Gary on behalf of the Trust to thank and praise him for the work that he has been doing.</p> <p><u>Growth Update</u></p> <p>PB updated on the Growth Working Group Meeting held on 12.05.20. A full record of the discussion is recorded in Part B of the Minutes.</p>	
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<p>6.</p>	<p>Chief Executive Officer’s Report</p> <p>MM’s report was circulated. MM noted that since the report was written the Government had proposed that some primary school years should return on 01.06.20. Everyone is working together to come up with a plan for this, and it is being approached very much as a Trust. There is work to be done around the health and safety, but MM is confident that the schools will be able to open on that date. The announcement that all primary school children will return by the end of June will need to be addressed at the time. MM is confident that the Trust can work together to ensure the safe and effective opening of the primaries after half-term.</p> <p>There is also work in progress on an enhanced transition for Year 6 over the summer holidays.</p> <p>MM noted that devices had been provided for all the disadvantaged children’s in the Trust. SP and CD had worked hard to ensure that these devices were available early on, meaning that there is not a single disadvantaged child in Exeter or Plymouth who does not have access to a device.</p> <p>MM reminded Trustees that £300k TCAF funding had been received from the Academisation of the Plymouth Schools. RB and MM have been invited to have an extraordinary Trust meeting with the RSC to look at future plans.</p> <p>MM noted that West Exe were identified as a school in Devon to be quality assured for Safeguarding. The report will be circulated. Action: TR to send West Exe Safeguarding Report to MF for circulation.</p> <p>AW asked for clarification on Trustees’ liability/ insurance cover in the event of any incident connected to schools reopening. It would be useful to get clarification from the insurance company regarding this. It was unclear if the legal implications of schools reopening had been thought through. DH noted that he would welcome some clarification of this in writing as soon as possible. AW noted that DCC are trying to get a county-wide view on this. AW is the governance representative on this group. They believe all MATs are covered through private policies, but this is being followed up. Action: MM to pick up obtaining clarification on legal position of trustees when meeting with PHP Law on 15.05.20.</p> <p>JL noted that the e-learning discussions and debates had been accelerated due to the current situation. This has evolved week on week, to monitor and challenge the engagement in home learning. All schools have had these discussions via the Heads meetings. West Exe and CEC have particularly well developed blended learning in place. Schools have been able to work individually on this. SOM had reviewed the uptake on Sparx and noted the differences between uptakes in schools. Isca looked particularly low, and SOM queried the reason for this. SOM had also noted that Year 10 were not engaging at such a good level as other years and queried what was being put in place to encourage those children to engage.</p> <p>JL responded that this was largely due to the culture that was in place pre-lockdown. St James and Cranbrook have previously had Sparx in place for four years, West Exe have a three year programme so this has continued. Other schools have not previously had this culture in place.</p>	<p>TR</p> <p>MM</p>
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	<p>There have been a lot of discussions between SLT to incentivise home learning, particularly in Year 10. The behavioural systems are successful in school, but these have been taken away with home learning. SOM noted that motivation was an issue for children, there is no instant feedback from teachers and this normally helps to keep them motivated. It would be helpful to think how to keep children engaged.</p> <p>JL noted that the number one thing from a wellbeing perspective, was to have a good work life balance for teachers.</p> <p>SS wished to formally record how well staff are putting the Trust’s principles into practice. She queried if the Trust was looking at any summer activities for children. MM confirmed that the Trust is looking at ways to support children over the summer. There is hope that the Government may provide some resource for this.</p> <p>A key part of the risk assessment will be to look at how disadvantaged children will catch up, the plan is for there to be a champion for this within the Trust. This will also look at how to provide more one-to-one support. MM hopes to present further details at the next Education Committee meeting in June.</p> <p>EH asked if there was something that could be circulated about how safeguarding works within the Trust and how this has been translated to children working at home. EH queried how the Trust is assuring itself that Safeguarding is still in place in a practical sense. MM will write a one pager to go with the Safeguarding Audit Report for circulation (MF to circulate/ TR to write this). TR confirmed that Safeguarding leads are working across schools and MM is also sitting on the Early Help board and feeding in.</p>	
7.	<p>PFI Update</p> <p>AW updated on the PFI Working Group meeting held on 19.03.20. It has been agreed in principle to set up a Company Limited by Shares as recommended by the Auditors and Legal advisors. It was suggested that the Board gave feedback on this proposal to sense check it before taking it to the Members. AW will be attending the next Members Meeting to update on the PFI Project. PHP Law is ready to form the company as soon as this is approved. A tripartite letter has been received from Sodexo and MSEL to enable us to proceed with the tenders. The next PFI Working Group is on 21.05.20.</p> <p>AW noted the need to move on with the Incorporation, and that this may need to be agreed prior to the Members meeting. This needs to be in place by July 2020 to enable to start with the staffing procedures.</p> <p>AW confirmed that Wynstream and St Peters are also supportive of the process.</p>	
8.	<p>Committee Minutes</p> <p><u>Audit, Finance & Resources – 22.04.20</u></p> <p>The Trust’s financial position is good and is feeling relatively secure. The TCAF funding from Plymouth went through prior to Lockdown. There are systems in place to bring Plymouth’s accounting in line with ours and there are no anticipated problems.</p> <p>Covid-19 related actions have been numerous but have been resolved</p>	

	<p>A reminder had been received regarding carrying on with internal scrutiny checks and a programme of internal audits has been agreed for next term that will meet the ESFA requirements. There are no major changes, however these will be remote rather than physical visits. The financial systems and controls are holding up well. AW extended his thanks to SP and CD for their work on this.</p> <p><u>Education Committee – 06.05.20</u></p> <p>The Education Committee was held under the Interim Governance Arrangements so the minutes were not yet available.</p> <p>Issues arising through LGBs were concerns around gaps emerging and widening between disadvantaged children and others within the Trust.</p> <p>The Collective Worship Policy at St Luke’s had been agreed.</p> <p>The need to update the Strategic Risk Register around Educational Outcomes related to Covid-19 had been identified.</p> <p>DH confirmed that an extra Education Committee meeting would be held in June 2020 prior to the end of the school year.</p>	
9.	<p>Financial Report and Budget Outlook</p> <p>The report was circulated.</p> <p>CD noted that the figures presented were the position at the end of March 2020 and had already been discussed at the AFR Committee. The risks and uncertainties around Covid-19 have been discussed in detail and the Committee is reasonably confident that good measures are in place.</p> <p>Plymouth Finances will be incorporated within the reports that come to future meetings.</p> <p>SP noted that her focus was currently on the medium-term and providing reassurance of the long-term sustainability. There is currently a £1.3m reserve. SP confirmed that in the longer term the Trust is sustainable, notwithstanding the emergency actions being taken currently.</p>	
Items for Information		
10.	<p>ESFA Letter to Academy Trust Accounting Officers</p> <p>The letter was noted for information only.</p>	
Any Other Business		
	<p>RB advised that TB the Headteacher at St Martin’s School in Cranbrook had retired. TB was critical and fundamental in supporting the Trust with building CEC. RB wanted to make Trustees aware and suggested sending TB a gift on behalf of the Trust. Action: MF to arrange gift for TB</p>	MF

<p>PB noted the position of the Teaching Unions on the reopening of Schools. MM confirmed that they had picked up only a small number of concerns from members within the Trust. There is also very little challenge from local union members across Exeter as a whole.</p> <p>AM noted the fear factor of parents around children returning to school. RB noted the importance of normalising things and getting back to normal and it was agreed that this needs to be monitored.</p> <p>SS noted the concern that the NGA advised it was the Headteacher’s responsibility for opening schools and doing a risk assessment. MM confirmed that this was the case in maintained schools, but that the Trust is responsible for the decision making for all schools and for sign-off of the risk assessment. AW queried if Trustees were responsible for signing the Risk Assessment of Schools opening up and if this should be designated to a Committee. Action: MM to get clarity on the process from PHP Law.</p> <p>RB extended the Trustees’ thanks to the Executive Leadership Team for their work during this period.</p> <p>RB also asked for Trustees to keep the communication lines open and to keep asking questions and engaging.</p> <p>Date of next meeting: Wednesday 1 July 2020, 4.30pm, Virtual Meeting</p> <p>The meeting closed at: 17:50</p>	MM
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Signed by the Chair of the Board:

Date: