

Board of Trustees
Wednesday 21 October 2020, 4.30pm
Virtual Meeting via Teams

List of actions from the meeting	
4.	MF to send Appointment Letters to all newly appointed Governors.
11.	MF to add Whipton Barton Governance to the Agenda for the Board Meeting on 09.12.20.
12.	MF to add Updates to the Articles of Association to the Agenda for the Members Meeting on 01.12.20.
List of decisions taken at the meeting	
3.	Sir David Carter has been commissioned to undertake an external review of the Trust's Governance Structure. This will commence on 01.11.20.
4.	The following LGB Appointments were ratified: Mark Peggs – Parent Governor, Isca Penny Hackworthy – Staff Governor, Exwick Heights Lucy Bradbury – Staff Governor, Exwick Heights (second term) Bob Hooper – Governor, Cranbrook Education Campus (second term) David Solomides – Governor, Cranbrook Education Campus (second term) Bryony Gilbert – Governor, Whipton Barton Catriona Elton – Parent Governor, Whipton Barton Julia Thornton – Staff Governor, St James (second term) Jason Nofal – Staff Governor, St James James Buchanan – Staff Governor, Marine Academy Primary
5.	The confirmed Term Dates for 2020/21 were noted by Trustees.
6.	The Diocese of Exeter's requested changes to the Articles of Association, in relation to All Saints Academy Plymouth joining the Trust, were agreed.

Board of Trustees
Wednesday 21 October 2020, 4.30pm
Virtual Meeting via Teams

Attended:

Rob Bosworth – Chair (RB)
 Lee Elliot-Major (LEM)
 Richard Jacobs (RJ)
 Beccy Mitchell (RM)
 Sarah O’Meara (SO)
 Alex Walmsley (AW)

Philip Bostock (PB)
 David Hall (DH)
 Moira Marder (MM)
 Andy Mulcock (AM)
 Saxon Spence (SS)
 Crispin Taylor (CT)

Charlotte Davies – Director of Finance & Resources (CD)
 Jon Lunn (JL)
 Melody Floyde - Clerk (MF)

Sue Pym – Chief Accountant (SP)
 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 pandemic, this meeting was held virtually using Microsoft Teams.</p> <p>Declarations of interest were noted, as follows: AW: Director, First Federation Trust. Also in relation to Item 12 - AW is a member of the Diocese of Exeter Education Schools Organisation & Governance Group (SOGG). RB: Exeter College DH: Exeter University</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of Previous meetings</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 01.07.20 were approved as a full and accurate record. All actions were recorded as complete, with the exception of 7. An additional Board Meeting, to discuss long-term Strategy, will be arranged for a suitable date in the future.</p>	

<p>3.</p>	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p><u>Additional Audit Committee for £50m turnover</u> The requirement within the Academies Financial Handbook for an additional Audit and Risk Committee to be established once annual turnover exceeds £50m was noted, this is likely to become relevant in the future.</p> <p><u>Sir David Carter Governance Review</u> RB updated that the brief of the planned review had been refined by the Chairs. MM outlined the timeline for the review - David will be starting on Stage 1, Assessing governance capacity and structure, on 01.11.20. A report will be produced by 31.12.20. There is a large amount of work involved and MM confirmed that Tamsin Frances, from West Exe, would be supporting with the process.</p> <p>RB reassured the Board that David would be looking at the Governance Structure, not the number of schools within the Trust and the focus would be on how the Structure reflects this. Interviews will be set up with Trustees and there will be an opportunity for all Trustees to be involved in the review process.</p> <p>CST Chairs Meeting RB had attended the virtual CST chairs meeting on 21.10.20 along with 72 other Trust Chairs. RB's reflection on the meeting confirmed that the Trust is in the correct place, and the meeting had validated the Trust's Governance during the Covid-19 pandemic. RB noted that this was a real credit to the Executive Team.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Appointments & Resignations</p> <p>The following changes to Governors within the LGBs were noted and ratified by the Board:</p> <p><u>Appointments</u> Mark Peggs – Parent Governor, Isca Penny Hackworthy – Staff Governor, Exwick Heights Lucy Bradbury – Staff Governor, Exwick Heights (second term) Bob Hooper – Governor, Cranbrook Education Campus (second term) David Solomides – Governor, Cranbrook Education Campus (second term) Bryony Gilbert – Governor, Whipton Barton Catriona Elton – Parent Governor, Whipton Barton Julia Thornton – Staff Governor, St James (second term) Jason Nofal – Staff Governor, St James James Buchanan – Staff Governor, Marine Academy Primary</p> <p><u>Resignations</u> Becky Meaton – Co-opted Governor, St Luke's Paul Brown – Foundation Governor, St Luke's Liz Partridge – Parent Governor, Cranbrook Education Campus Mike Hickie – Governor, West Exe</p> <p>Action: MF to send Appointment Letters to all newly appointed Governors.</p>	<p>MF</p>

	<p>Succession Planning</p> <p>RB noted that his term as Chair would be ending in April 2021 therefore a new Chair of the Trust would be needed. RB noted that the Articles of Association had previously been amended to reflect that the Chair and Vice Chair could come from within the Trustee group, rather than from the College or University.</p> <p>RB will be proactively talking to those who have shown interest in the role. RB also requested that if anybody had any input, or was interested in the role, to contact him to discuss this further.</p> <p>Jade Otty will replace RB on the Board as a Trustee in due course. It is likely that there will be a period of overlap.</p> <p>There will also be discussions about the University representation going forwards.</p>	
5.	<p>Term Dates 2020/21</p> <p>The agreed Term Dates were noted. The planned two-week October half-term had been well received by staff and students, particularly given the current Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>TR confirmed that all LGBs had checked and confirmed the term dates.</p>	
6	<p>Chief Executive Officer's Report</p> <p>The Chief Executive Officer's report was circulated with the Board Papers.</p> <p>MM gave an update on recent Covid-19 cases within the Trust and noted that it had been a challenging few weeks.</p> <p>There was now a central record of all staff and students who have had positive Covid-19 cases within the Trust, alongside monitoring of those Year Groups affected. MM updated that, since returning to school in September, 827 students across the Trust had, at some point, been required to isolate for up to two weeks along with 17 staff. There were currently 474 students and 11 staff self-isolating. This had caused significant disruption.</p> <p>The home learning package had gone well and students have received a good continuity of learning. MM was very pleased with how well it had worked so far. There had been a number of Public Health Meetings to discuss Exeter, and there was now a more personalised response for Devon. It was noted that the support from Public Health England (PHE) had been inconsistent, but the good processes within Trust schools had meant less disruption. Currently only small bubbles of direct contacts had been told to self-isolate. There had, to date, been no Covid-19 cases within Trust Primary Schools.</p> <p>MM updated that nationally there had been 900,000 new claimants for free school meals. Within the Trust there were 250 extra applications which was proving challenging.</p> <p>MM noted the positive work of the Central Team and the Headteachers throughout the period.</p> <p>RB noted that, as cases had become more prevalent within the Trust, it had been decided to report to Trustees at set points. RB registered thanks for the support of the Executive Team</p>	

throughout the current weeks. RB also noted that the negative local news reports were not reflective of the way the Team were dealing with students with Covid-19.

It was acknowledged that the balance between physical and mental health was difficult at the current time.

JL noted that a new DfE expectation for immediate home learning was coming into force. JL confirmed that the many creative solutions, from across the Trust, had been collated and distributed within the Trust for information. There were a number of different scenarios around the number and types of students isolating.

JL updated that some teachers had been able to deliver lessons whilst isolating at home, with a support cover in the classroom. This had received very good feedback from parents. JL confirmed that overall parental feedback had been very positive with regards to the home learning provision. There would be an agreed best practice going forwards.

SOM queried what happened in the case of individual students being told to isolate, and whether they would be able to access learning from home. JL confirmed that the learning expectation from DfE would be for 4-5 hours of learning to be completed per day. The Trust had developed systems to enable this to happen. TR noted that, if a child was absent due to Covid-19, they would be able to access the Moodle or other system that the school was using, and reports would be produced to show that they were accessing the work. TR also noted that two members of staff had been employed to upload materials to the Moodle at West Exe.

AM queried if the Covid-19 cases to date within the Trust were showing symptoms. MM confirmed that they had all been asymptomatic and that there was no evidence of spread within schools. There had been a case in MAP secondary where a single parent had become very poorly with Covid and the school had been working with the authorities to support the student during the time.

RM queried the mental health support for staff and students. MM confirmed that there was a page on the Staff Hub Website with information to signpost staff to sources of support. TR noted that absence was being managed carefully and the Trust were supporting those who were (or may become) clinically vulnerable. In terms of students there was Tier 2 work that could be done which was going live in two schools i.e. talking therapies and Living Life to the Full to promote positive mental health (EH4MH).

MM reassured Trustees that students who were anxious prior to the pandemic were still the same children now. There had not been large numbers of additional anxious children since the start of the pandemic. TR noted the importance of following up on non-Covid absences to check the reasons for these. There was also some concern regarding students opting out of Education in preference of home schooling.

LEM queried if there were any widening gaps between disadvantaged children and others. TR noted that baseline testing had been undertaken but there was not currently any meaningful data. MM noted that, whilst there was a gap, it was not significantly bigger than post Covid. MM noted that the provision of free school meals for all children had been piloted at Marine Academy which had vastly improved attendance, even on pre-Covid attendance levels. TR noted that there would be a meeting on 06.11.20 to look at the best use of the catch-up funding for disadvantaged children.

	<p>SS noted that she was very pleased to hear about the free school meals being provided. She also felt that it was important to put pressure on the Government to provide free school meals during school holidays.</p> <p>AW queried where the boundary was set for Trustees' involvement in partial closure of schools, given that Trustees had overriding Health & Safety accountability. CD confirmed that, where a closure was as a result of a PHE directive or guidance, Headteachers could confirm closure and would notify the Executive, LGB and Trustees. However, the Executive and Trustees would still need to approve closure in other cases (e.g. if staff absence was high or other H&S risks were identified). CD confirmed that this was set out in the Safe Operating during Covid Policy that was adopted in September.</p> <p>RB noted that school closure had moved from a strategic to an operational remit. Although any large scale closures would still be strategic and require input from the Trustees. MM noted that the Regional Schools Commissioner had said that no schools should be closed under any circumstances even with high levels of infection.</p>	
7.	<p>Data Presentation</p> <p><u>Update on Summer Performance</u></p> <p>JL shared the presentation on Summer Performance and noted that this had been reviewed in full at the Education Committee on 16.09.20. JL also shared data on school absence and noted that DfE report on absence rather than attendance.</p> <p>JL noted that the DfE return asked for schools to state the number of children on roll versus the number of children not present, it did not take into account the reasons for this. JL had added the X code – Covid related absence – into the graphs for the reference of Trustees. It was noted that the national percentage of students not attending was rising, however numbers within TWMAT schools were more “spiky” taking into account periods of isolation for Covid.</p> <p>JL also shared staff absence data with the Trustees.</p> <p>SOM noted the change to the attendance within the last week. It appeared that MAP primary was very low and queried the reason for this as there had been no cases of Covid-19 in primary schools. JL confirmed that the data included MAP primary Nursery where children were not timetabled to attend every day, however the days when these children were not expected to be in attendance was still recorded as non-attendance. JL confirmed that there were no concerns related to primary school attendance within the Trust.</p> <p>RB queried if there were any causes for concern coming from any of the schools, or patterns emerging. JL confirmed that there were no concerns and that the Trust schools were comparing favourably to the national figure. MM confirmed that she was very pleased with the attendance and this was testament to the schools.</p> <p>RJ queried to what extent the figures may show any herd immunity within the schools. MM noted that there had not yet been any discussions on this but it was likely that large numbers of children may be asymptomatic and spreading between them. JL noted that there was no evidence to show that Covid-19 could not be caught more than once.</p>	

	<p>RB queried if TR had any specific focus from within the schools. TR noted the short-term need to follow up absence, and following up with Educational Welfare to look at medium term strategic planning to engage children and get them back to school. CD had been doing a piece of work on this. There will also be some discussion around the use of catch up funding to address this in the short-term. There needs to be a plan to get the students to reengage and to sustain this after half-term too.</p> <p>LEM queried exam results for this year and noted that the exam results for 2020-21 were likely to show a similar grade distribution. JL confirmed that this data would not be available until after half-term.</p> <p>RB confirmed that currently the data focus was on attendance.</p>	
8.	<p>Growth Report</p> <p>PB gave an update on the Growth Working Group meeting held on 21.10.20. The discussion is recorded in full in Part B of the Minutes.</p>	
9.	<p>Committee Minutes</p> <p>Audit, Finance & Resources – 23.09.20</p> <p>AW gave an update on the key issues from the AFR meeting held on 23.09.20. The Trust Outturn was at breakeven, which had been the target and was reassuring.</p> <p>A couple of emerging issues were around internal scrutiny and the requirements of the new Academies Financial Handbook. AW and SP had met with the internal auditors to start planning for how to look at internal scrutiny throughout the year. There is a good handle on this.</p> <p>The plans for the next 3-5 years look under control. The financial update and budget outlook had been shared with the Board. SP confirmed that things would likely change rapidly but that everything was looking manageable.</p> <p>AW extended his thanks to the Finance Team for their support and also noted that PHP Law had done some very positive work recently. The cohesive working was noted.</p> <p>Education Committee – 16.09.20</p> <p>DH noted the five key issues from the Education Committee.</p> <p>Remote working – there had been reassuring comments from the Executive about the high standards linked to the Oak Academy and the work being done within the Trust. This has now been built upon.</p> <p>Ofsted – normal Ofsted visits would not resume until January 2021, although there were some monitoring visits taking place. AW confirmed that this was under review.</p> <p>Performance Data – showed a picture of rising scores across the board in terms of key indicators. There had been some notable large increases at Marine and All Saints. However it was noted that this was not comparing like for like. The grades received had been quality assured but a balanced cautious approach in interpreting the data was needed.</p>	

	<p>Mental Health – the trust mental health survey was currently on hold until an appropriate time to undertake this.</p> <p>The Bridge – had small numbers of students, but it was anticipated these would rise over the course of the year.</p> <p>Complaints – MM and DH would be meeting to discuss complaints and the monitoring of these via the Education Committee.</p> <p>LEM queried if there were contingency plans within schools if exams could not be taken in 2021. TR confirmed that the system had yet to be defined so it was important to ensure the Trust was well-placed for all eventualities.</p> <p>It was noted that Exwick Heights had recently received a very positive monitoring visit from Ofsted.</p> <p>Pay & Conditions Committee – 18.09.20</p> <p>RB noted that the Pay & Conditions Committee had met. A CEO salary benchmarking exercise had been undertaken and this paper had been shared with the Trustees. This is an annual external benchmarking exercise carried out by PHP law. RB noted that, in accordance with the report, the Executive Salaries were in line with the national benchmarks.</p> <p>LEM left the meeting at 17:50</p>	
10.	<p>Plymouth Governance</p> <p>RB noted that AW had done a good job on overseeing the Plymouth Governance. AW updated that the LGB numbers were low, particularly in the Secondary. AW had recently had a tour of the school with the LGBs and everything had been done following Covid-19 protocols. More governors were needed and the need for a coherent Hub was evident to bond the Plymouth schools together.</p> <p>RB noted that MM and the Exec Team had started a recruitment campaign for Plymouth. RB was also due to meet with the Chair of the Chamber of Commerce to raise the profile of the Board, and to target suitable people within Plymouth.</p> <p>SS noted that the DfE may be requiring single academies to join MATs. She queried if either of the academies were working with other schools and if any of them may be potentials for the Trust. MM noted that Plymouth was an area that the Government were currently monitoring. There were two notable schools who would be interested, but this was for the medium to longer term. There was opportunity to grow within Plymouth in the future.</p>	
11.	<p>Whipton Barton Update</p> <p>SOM gave an update on Whipton Barton. SOM was currently Chairing the Whipton LGB meetings as the Chair had stepped down. There had been a recruitment campaign although as yet this had not been successful so Emma Darke was working on other options.</p> <p>RJ noted that any recruitment, during the Covid-19 pandemic, would not necessarily lead to the best applicants. It would be beneficial to wait to find the correct applicant, rather than rushing.</p>	

	<p>The discussion is recorded in full in Part B of the Minutes.</p> <p>RB recorded the Board’s thanks to SOM for her work with Whipton.</p> <p>Whipton Barton will be kept as an agenda item for the next meeting.</p>	MF
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Items for Decision		
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12.	<p>Articles of Association – Incorporation of All Saints Academy Plymouth</p> <p>The suggested changes to the Articles of Association had been set out in a report from PHP Law. CD confirmed that the changes were needed because All Saints was a Voluntary Aided school, and there was not currently a VA school within the Trust.</p> <p>The changes to the Articles of Association were agreed.</p> <p>Action: MF to add Updates to Articles of Association to the Agenda for the next Members Meeting.</p>	
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Items for Information		
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13.	<p>Report from Working Groups</p> <p><u>PFI Working Group</u></p> <p>There had not been a PFI Working Group meeting since the previous Board Meeting. The next meeting will be on 04.11.20.</p> <p>CD confirmed that the new target date for the transfer of services was 01.04.21. The project was progressing well, with continued support from St Peters and Wynstream.</p>	
14.	<p>Strategic Risk Register</p> <p>There were no significant changes to the Risk Register. The main changes were to the Risk Assessments and contingency planning within schools but not to the higher level strategic risks.</p> <p>AW reiterated that the Risk Register would drive the internal scrutiny programme going forwards to identify working actions. All potential risks would be taken into account, and external scrutiny would be utilised where necessary.</p> <p>RJ left the meeting at 18:10</p>	
15.	<p>ESFA Documents</p> <p>The following documents were circulated for information and monitoring. These were formally noted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter to Accounting Officers July • Letter to Accounting Officers August • West Exe in Year Adjustment Letter • ASAP PNA Deferral letter 	

	<p>SP noted the focus on internal assurance arrangements and the requirement of the Board. A matrix would be put together for the AFR Committee to confirm how to get Assurance on each of the key points.</p> <p>A funding adjustment for West Exe had been agreed for the next three years. SP also noted that the ESFA were viewing All Saints and QE funding as linked. RB noted that this was a large piece of work and a credit to the Finance Team and TR to achieve the West Exe funding adjustment in-year. MM also noted SP's very positive work on this and the good relationship with the ESFA. AW confirmed the unusual situation regarding the West Exe and All Saints support which reflects very positively on the team.</p>	
16.	<p>Letter from Baroness Burridge/ Academies Governance Role Descriptors</p> <p>The recent letter from Baroness Burridge and the Academies Governance Role Descriptors were circulated to Trustees for information. RB noted that this endorsed the responsibilities within the Governance structure.</p>	
Any Other Business		
	<p>Strategic Away Day RB was reflecting on the best time to do this and how it would look. RB requested any ideas or suggestions. This needs to be a structured and positive day to get the Board in the best shape possible.</p> <p>Mental Health – CT had undertaken some work on behalf of the Trust around Mental Health. RB extended his thanks to CT for this and particularly for his support to CEC following a request from the Chair.</p> <p>Mike Hickie – Governor at West Exe had recently resigned after 24 years long service within the Trust Schools. RB noted this and the positive influence of Mike over the years. MM and TR also both noted Mike's positive work and that he was fundamental in the turnaround of St James. RB thanked TR for arranging the formal thanks to Mike.</p> <p>Richard Jacobs – on behalf of the Trust RB extended congratulations to Richard for being granted the Freedom of the City by Exeter City Council.</p> <p>Executive Team - RB formally recorded the Board's appreciation of the work of the Executive and noted the support of the Board.</p> <p>Date of next meeting: Wednesday 9 December 2020, 4.30pm, TBC</p> <p>The meeting closed at: 18:20</p>	

Signed by the Chair of the Board:

Date: