

Board of Trustees
Wednesday 28 April 2021, 4.30pm
Virtual Meeting via Teams

	List of actions from the meeting
4.	MF to send appointment letter to BS Governor at West Exe.
11.	MF to upload Governance Review Presentation to Board Effect.
	List of decisions taken at the meeting
4.	BS was formally ratified as a Governor at West Exe School.
4.	It was agreed that RJ and SS would each undertake a third term of four years as Trustees starting on 27.05.21.

Board of Trustees
Wednesday 28 April 2021, 4.30pm
Virtual Meeting via Teams

Attended:

Andy Mulcock (AM) - Chair
 David Hall (DH)
 Moira Marder (MM)
 Saxon Spence (SS)

Philip Bostock (PB)
 Richard Jacobs (RJ)
 Sarah O’Meara (SO)
 Alex Walmsley (AW)

Charlotte Davies – Director of Business & Operations (CD)
 Jon Lunn – Director of Education Performance (JL)

Sue Pym – Director of Finance (SP)
 Tim Rutherford (TR) – Deputy CEO

In Attendance:

Tamsin Frances (TF) – Strategic Projects Lead for Item 11 only

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>AM welcomed everyone to the meeting which was his first as Chair of the Trust. Apologies were received from Crispin Taylor (CT) & Rob Bosworth (RB).</p> <p>Declarations of interest were noted, as follows: AW: Director, First Federation Trust. DH: Exeter University</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of Previous meetings</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 28.04.21 were approved as a full and accurate record. All actions were recorded as complete.</p>	
3.	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>There were no specific matters arising.</p>	

4.	<p>Appointments & Resignations</p> <p><u>Appointments</u></p> <p>The recent LGB appointments were noted and agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barbara Sweeney – West Exe <p>Action: MF to send appointment letter to BS as per usual process.</p> <p><u>Trustees</u></p> <p>RJ and SS have agreed to undertake a third term as Trustees starting from 27 May 2021. This was agreed.</p>	MF
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Items For Monitoring		
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5.	<p>Chief Executive Officer’s Report</p> <p>MM updated that attendance across Trust schools had been very good and that students had engaged well since the return following lockdown. MM also confirmed that there had been very limited disruption from Covid to education since the return. PCR verification had been very helpful as it meant that students could now return to school without isolating if, following a positive lateral flow test, their subsequent PCR test was negative. TR noted that there had been two positive cases in the last few days in Trust schools both with asymptomatic students.</p> <p>AM queried if this was typical compared to other schools in the country. TR noted that anecdotally there had been cases of positive lateral flow tests proving negative with a subsequent PCR test. The figures quoted in the media for reliability of Lateral flow tests appeared to be higher than what had been seen on the ground.</p> <p>MM updated on recent Leadership appointments in the Trust:</p> <p>Clare Jones - Head of School at MAP Primary. Victoria Griffin – Senior Deputy at St Luke’s starting in September 2021. Mark Cahill – Deputy Head at St Luke’s for Behaviour and Inclusion.</p> <p>MM noted the positive appointments at St Luke’s and acknowledged the work that had been put in by TR and Kealey Sherwood.</p> <p>The interviews for the new Headteacher at Whipton Barton had been held and an appointment had been made subject to this being signed off. The post had been offered to DM who was relocating from Gloucester. MM confirmed that the process had been very vigorous and wide ranging, MM was confident in what DM could offer Whipton. He was a good cultural match and it was very exciting. SOM agreed that the process was very thorough with feedback gathered from all stakeholders and this had been listened to. SOM also felt that the process had helped to bring the current Deputy Heads at Whipton on board. MM noted that SOM had been a key part of the process and thanked her for this input.</p> <p>AW queried if the appointment process at MAP had been as thorough. MM updated that it was an internal fixed term appointment for 18 months to cover Siobhan Meredith’s</p>	
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secondment. MM had been involved in the appointment process along with the LGBs. She confirmed that the process was thorough and it was an exciting opportunity for Clare.

PB requested an update on the new Headteacher development programme “South West 100”. MM confirmed that the programme would train and develop the next 100 Headteachers across the South West. TWMAT, Westcountry and Education South West MATs were involved in the programme in conjunction with Feltham Reach Teaching Academy. The RSC would also be contributing some money as the programme involves Plymouth. This was a way of the Trust to take ownership. TR noted that the programme was important for the region and that it would be interesting to see how it grew. There had been a number of applications including 6-7 leaders from within the Trust who had signed up. TR also felt that the programme could be a potential key recruitment tool going forwards.

JL gave a presentation on the Trust-wide Home Learning Survey. He noted that the information was a starting point for discussions with schools for surveys in general, so the headlines would not be used for any decisions, but they did pose questions.

Over 1,000 parents had responded to the survey. 95% agreed that they had received a good home learning experience. The responses were overwhelmingly positive around the quality and amount of home learning. The greatest variant was in the amount of feedback received on completed work.

AW noted the wide variants in the responses from parents to the survey. He queried if the very low numbers from MAP and ASAP secondaries were a cause for concern. TR noted that this had been followed up with line managers and that there was confidence that this would be more aligned going forwards.

MM noted that importance of engaging with the Communities. Some of the Plymouth families were hard to reach, and this remained a challenge. JL also noted that schools had been doing individual surveys for a number of years, and that some work was needed to investigate why some schools got more responses than others.

Attendance had been above average in all Trust schools since lockdown eased in March 2021.

In relation to assessments, Teachers Assessed Grades was the term being used by the Government, however this was not felt to be the correct term. The Trust was using “Centre Assessed Grades” as this did not put accountability onto a single teacher. Lindsay Skinner had been leading the work around the timeline for Centre Assessed Grades and had developed a tool for Headteachers to work with.

JL noted that grades needed to be compared to 2017-19 grades, and this was to be used as a benchmark. JL had been working on predictions with a RAG system, this would allow any unusual grades to be flagged and addressed accordingly.

LEM noted the bias in teacher assessments against poorer pupils and queried what the Trust was doing to discuss this possibility with the schools and how this could disadvantage poorer pupils. He also queried the findings on how far behind students were and if this was widening the attainment gap.

JL noted that, with regards to the bias, the majority of schools had moved to terminal assessments as main evidence. There had been constant tweaks and amendments, however what started with 1-9 grade descriptions for every subject had now been changed to predominantly terminal assessments. The terminal assessments should potentially negate the bias, however the impact of lockdown could have disadvantaged the children’s learning over time which would impact their performance in the assessments. TR noted that schools had to publish their Centre policy and that this would include details of how they would look into bias. In the Trust this included blind marking and sampling to look for any discrepancies. This had been discussed by the Heads in the Trust.

JL noted the significant difference to the previous year when individual teacher, subject and schools’ raw predictions had been used. It was currently unknown where the gaps had widened. JL confirmed that the Trust was in a lucky position as there was a data set. The maths community within the Trust had a good data set from the end of December, so this could be compared to the terminal assessment. The only other evidence was from MAP Primary which showed that there was not a widespread gap, there had been some positives as well as negatives. TR noted that there was a gap in attendance and that, going forward, this was an area that needed to be improved for disadvantaged children. This was key for the Trust.

LEM noted that research nationally showed that, in the latest lockdown when schools were open for vulnerable and key children workers, disadvantaged children were less likely to attend school even though they had the opportunity and that generally more middle-class parents were likely to be key workers.

RJ queried if there was an element of examination process in teacher assessed grades. It was concerning as children having experience of sitting examinations would be beneficial for them in years to come. JL noted that the assessments had been based on mock exam mentality, however children in Year 12 could be disadvantaged in reaching Year 13 having never sat an exam. TR noted that children within Trust schools should be well-placed.

SOM queried if the centre assessed grades were being approached uniformly across the Trust schools and if there was collaborative working. SOM also noted that in terms of TAG risk assessments, St James did not appear to have a great percentage in basics.

JL confirmed that Headteachers across the Trust were working together, however not all subjects in the Trust were aligned to the same exam boards yet. TR also noted that there was a common centre policy and the process would be moderated carefully across the Trust. SOM queried if Trustees would be able to have confidence in the similarity across the Trust. JL noted that there would be no comparison of 2020/21 data coming from DfE. TR also confirmed that if there were concerns these would be addressed.

SS noted that blind moderation was very important to ensure the process was as fair as possible. SS queried if QE and MAP sixth forms were working together to look at A’ Levels. She also queried if question banks were being used. JL noted that the two Trust sixth forms were currently in very different places, so the working relationship was not developed yet. With regards to the blind marking and bias, because the language was about teachers evidencing and having the potential of appeal, the teachers needed to be protected and the process needed to stand up to scrutiny. TR noted that some may be using the bank of questions, but that these were not being universally adopted. The Trust was using markers to mark the entire cohorts and there were a number of expert markers within the Trust.

	<p>JL also noted that there was a Trust-wide staff survey forthcoming.</p> <p>AM queried what the main concern shown by the data was, and what was being done about it. JL confirmed that the protection of staff with the teacher assessed grades was the main concern. The Trust was working hard on the collaboration and support amongst heads and senior leaders. TR also noted that there was an additional disadvantaged students leads conference being held in June that JL would be running.</p>	
6.	<p>Growth Report</p> <p>PB updated that potential growth in Plymouth had been the primary focus of the Growth Working Group held on 30.03.21.</p> <p>A full record of the discussion is in Part B of the minutes.</p>	
7.	<p>Update from Committees</p> <p><u>Audit, Finance & Resources Committee / Financial Update</u></p> <p>AW updated on the key points from the Audit, Finance & Resources Committee held on 17.03.21. The financial position of the Trust was under reasonable control. One or two schools needed care and attention but the Trust should come out within budget. There were also some areas of concern around Related Party Transactions and PFI reporting which had been dealt with.</p> <p>The biggest issue at the time was the ASAP Sports Hall where the costings were expected to be higher than hoped. CD was working hard on trying to reduce the costs and to negotiate better funding. AW confirmed that this was ongoing.</p> <p>The Budget would be submitted during the Summer Term and SP was working on this. SP noted that a balanced budget for 2021/22 looked very possible. Some schools needed extra work and a strategy with short term deficits in relation to school improvement may be needed, however the direction was clear. SP also noted that the current year was looking reasonable.</p> <p>SP noted that School Condition Allocation Funding had been announced and was better than expected.</p> <p>SS noted an interest in the Trust’s gender pay gap report and queried if this was a significant problem and whether the Pay & Conditions Committee were aware of what work was needed. SP noted that the gap in teacher pay had been looked at rather than support staff pay. SP also confirmed that there were groups looking at the issues as part of the Governance Review. However it was not a large problem when looked at by discipline rather than staff as a whole.</p> <p>AW formally noted thanks to SP and CD for their ongoing hard work.</p>	

	<p><u>Education Committee</u></p> <p>DH updated that the Education Committee had not met since the previous Board meeting. He noted the difficult conditions that the Executive were working under, given the latest announcements and uncertainty of national announcements, and stated that the fact that Trustees had been largely unaware was testament to the work of the Executive.</p> <p>DH also reassured Trustees that the performance of schools in assessments would not be included in league tables. These would be based on other factors i.e. attendance.</p> <p>SS queried if there was a mechanism to resolve conflicts between the Finance and Education teams. AW confirmed that there was a mechanism in place for this and that finance was not a blocker to school improvement. DH also noted that the Trust Chairs meetings were an appropriate forum to discuss any conflicts that arose. SS noted the importance of avoiding duplication.</p> <p>TR confirmed that this question needed to be kept at the heart of all decisions if the Trust was to remain values driven.</p>	
8.	<p>Plymouth Governance Update</p> <p>AW noted that he had not attended the last MAP Secondary LGB meeting and that he would be interested to hear MM's update on Governance.</p> <p>MM noted that a new Chair of Governors at MAP Secondary had been identified. This was very positive and the person came well recommended.</p> <p>AW confirmed that he would be stepping back from attending the MAT LGB meetings at the end of the academic year.</p>	
9.	<p>Whipton Barton Update</p> <p>SOM gave an update on Whipton Barton and noted that the appointment of the new Headteacher was the start of a positive period. The school refurbishment was progressing well.</p> <p>SOM noted the exciting times ahead and that it was a great time to become part of the School.</p> <p>AM thanked SOM for her work with Whipton Barton.</p> <p>A full record of the discussion is in Part B of the minutes.</p>	
10.	<p>Whipton Barton Resource Base Consultation</p> <p>MM noted that SP had undertaken a lot of work around the budget modelling for the Resource Base which would support eight pupils. Whipton would be one of six bases across the county to support children with communication interaction and mental health challenges. The process had been competitive and Whipton had done well to go through the process and be successful. SP noted that this was very positive. AM also agreed that it looked like a very good initiative.</p>	

	A full record of the discussion is in Part B of the Minutes.	
11.	<p>Update on Governance Review Implementation</p> <p>TF joined the meeting at 6.00pm.</p> <p>TF gave a presentation on the proposed changes and timeline. TR confirmed that TF was leading on Strategic Projects for the Trust. The slides would be circulated after the meeting to all Trustees for comment. Action: MF to upload TF's presentation to Board Effect.</p> <p>A full record of the discussion is in Part B of the minutes.</p> <p>TF left the meeting at 6.25pm</p>	MF

Items for Information

12.	<p>PFI Update</p> <p>AW gave an update on the PFI Working Group meeting held on 22.03.21. Following the meeting, the TWMAT Trustees had agreed in principle to take on the PFI Soft Services for Trust PFI schools plus St Peters and Wynstream. The Fusion School Services company would be responsible for running this.</p> <p>AW acknowledged that the process had been frustrating and that other parties had not kept to agreed timelines. The paperwork had also undergone many revisions, however the intention was now that the legal documents would be signed on 29.04.21.</p> <p>AW thanked CD for her work throughout the process, particularly in keeping expenditure under control. He also noted that SP had developed a good financial model and that Rachel Carter, Trust PFI Manager, had done a phenomenal job in getting the work into practice in the schools.</p> <p>CD confirmed that the service changes had gone ahead as planned on 01.04.21, operating under a letter of intent. Formal approval had now been received from the PFI Lenders Forum and documents were being signed. CD also thanked the Trustees involved in the PFI Working Group for their work throughout the process.</p> <p>AM reiterated AW's thanks to CD and noted that this was greatly appreciated. MM seconded the thanks and noted her pride in the work of the PFI Working Group for getting the new services up and running. This was ground breaking and would be used as a case study for other schools in the future.</p>	
13	<p>Strategic Risk Register (STANDING ITEM)</p> <p>CD gave an overview of the changes to the Strategic Risk Register and noted the intention to move to a stage where some risks were archived and covered under business as usual.</p> <p>The ASAP sports hall risk had been added to the Register following the previous AFR meeting.</p>	

	The School Improvement Section was due for review at the Education Committee on 05.05.21.	
Any Other Business		
	<p>AM raised the potential of a Social Event for Trustees and the Executive on 25.06.21. Trustees felt that this would be a good idea and RJ was happy to host. It was agreed to make arrangements once lockdown restrictions were confirmed as being lifted.</p> <p>The meeting closed at: 18:38</p> <p>Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 26 May 2021, 4.30pm, Microsoft Teams</p>	

Signed by the Chair of the Board:

ARMulcah

Date: 26.05.21