

MINUTES of the BOARD MEETING

20 May 2025, 1p.m.

Part A Public

| Item | Subject | Action |
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| | <p>Trustees present: V = virtual</p> <p>Matt Brierley (MB)</p> <p>Karen Brokenshire (KB),</p> <p>Amy Claridge (AC)</p> <p>Rob Gasson (RG) <i>items 1-9 only</i></p> <p>Karen Harris (KH) V</p> <p>Mike Hosking (MH) – Chair</p> <p>Nick Lake (NL)</p> <p>Ross Schreiber (RS)</p> <p>Peter Sheppard (PS)</p> <p><i>Also present:</i></p> <p>Jem Alder (JA) – Trust Governance Lead</p> <p>Cathryn Andrews (CA) – Director of Development <i>items 1-9 only</i></p> <p>Simon Hague (SE) – CEO <i>items 1-9 only</i></p> <p>Jess Hutchings (JH) – Governance Co-ordinator</p> <p>Tamsin Lamb (TL) – Director of Education</p> <p>Sean Pinhay (SP) – Chief Finance and Operations Officer [CFOO]</p> <p>Vanessa Schreiber (VS) – Executive PA</p> | |
| 1 | Appointment of Chair | |
| 1.1 | MH was re-appointed as Chair until end of July 2026. | |
| 2 | Welcome and Apologies | |
| 2.1 | Apologies: Deborah Richards (DR) | |
| 2.2 | MH reported that DR has offered her resignation from the Board from the end of this term due to a change of job. | |
| 3 | Conflicts of Interest: no additional interests were declared. | |
| 4 | Minutes of the meeting of 1 April 2025 were accepted as an accurate record. | |
| 5 | Action Tracker / Matters arising | |
| 5.1 | <p>Tracker n.177 Skills audit.</p> <p>JA confirmed decision has been made to retain our existing skills audit form rather than a potential alternative from Governor Hub.</p> | |
| 6 | STRATEGIC / OPERATIONS | |
| 6.1 | CEO's update | |
| 6.1.1 | <p>National / Regional update.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No significant changes from most recent RDD meeting – various items 'in progress' Priority is the region's average KS2 results for disadvantaged pupils (39 vs 46% nationally). Last year the Trust's figure was 49%. EYFS – particularly for boys - a priority for new RISE teams | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recent gender ruling by the courts impacts on existing protected characteristics – waiting on guidance from DfE. Not aware of any staff in this category but do have some pupils. | |
| 6.1.2 | <p>Growth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Penpol academy order issued – currently working to a joining date of 1st October but awaiting DfE confirmation Some work to complete before the summer break Their recent Ofsted inspection was Good with some Outstanding aspects Strategy in place to find an Executive Head for Marazion | |
| 6.1.3 | <p>Strategy Day 9 July.</p> <p>Current plan is Heads meet at start of the day and work with TL to draft next School Improvement Development plan.</p> <p>Joint session to include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Big Moves and decide the next ones Core objectives – review wording especially the growth target Discuss emerging data for declining pupil population and implications for the Trust Risk Platform - complete our review of strategic KPIs <p>SH suggested having some Trustees attend the earlier session too might be helpful?</p> <p>Agreed that completing any outstanding risk analysis would best be done in advance.</p> | SH |
| 6.2 | Policy approvals | |
| 6.2.1 | <p>Premises Lettings.</p> <p>SP explained this policy had been reviewed as Heads had asked for guidance and in preparation for letting enquiries for the new training centre at Tolvaddon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charging rates are evidence based – chosen to pitch ourselves just below competitors Both Community and Commercial rates to reflect different users Tolvaddon potentially largest income source in the future as currently don't have many lettings in our schools Proposed to taper in for long standing school lettings <p><i>KH asked if greater clarity is required for criteria of what type of bookings we will not allow?</i></p> <p>SP will review.</p> <p><i>MB asked if Trust is confident all users understand their safeguarding responsibilities?</i></p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>Policy approved.</p> | |
| 6.2.2 | <p>Reserves.</p> <p>Revised policy sets out both our approach to reserves and also to community (GAG) pooling – a common approach within our sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community pooling has been reviewed and refined annually since we introduced it – expect this to continue Reserves approach sets out what has been our custom and practice The 8.8% target is similar to our monthly payroll of c.£1.5m, but well above the 5% figure mentioned in DfE guidance. | |

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| | Meeting noted that this topic often gets media interest and the suggestion was made that the reasons for needing reserves could be given more prominence? Policy was approved subject to updating all references to DfE guidance. | SP/JA |
| 6.2.3 | Staff Disciplinary / Grievance procedures. TL reported these were updates of current versions and had been agreed with the unions. Suggestion was made to introduce concept of "refrain from work" rather than suspension? Both procedures were approved and this suggestion will be considered at a future update. | |
| 7 | FINANCE | |
| 7.1 | Budget Monitoring | |
| 7.1.1 | SP reported overall position is projected overspend has reduced by £127K to £479K – this includes additional capital expenditure previously agreed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Received additional grant for teacher's price of living rise • EHCP funding continues to rise – but so do associated costs of support staff • Supply a continuing challenge – team is looking at how we can address this and requesting we are informed of any regular commitments at budget setting stage • Significant income reductions for extended provision at 3 schools • Nursery numbers down • 8 schools performing worse than expected, 11 making a net contribution | |
| 7.1.2 | <i>KH asked if some of these issues will be looked at in forthcoming internal audit visit?</i> SP confirmed they will. <i>Q: Do we know about changes to nursery numbers pre-budget setting?</i> We do discuss with each Head but too many variables exist to make accurate predictions so feel being more prudent possibly best solution? <i>Q: Can we avoid a repeat of Marazion's additional transfer overspend with Penpol?</i> Yes planning to include more costs in budgeting. | |
| 7.1.3 | Capital expenditure noted – included as no FAR Committee meeting took place this half term. | |
| 7.2 | Budget 2025.26 Update SP summarised recent work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added more admin provision eg schools with larger nursery settings • KPIs – requesting feedback on definition for disadvantage eg number of FSM children • Variations table – not proposing to change • Staffing proposals from schools have aligned closely with our KPI model • Where EHCPs have been requested we will incur extra costs – even if not subsequently agreed. Last year we used our own top-up funding for this. SP added that the work and decisions taken a year ago to reduce costs have put us in a much better position for the next budget round. | |

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| | On behalf of the Board MH thanked SP and his team for the huge effort involved in developing what has become a very sophisticated process. | |
| 7.3 | ICT CAPEX update Discussed at last Board and report explains subsequent decisions taken by SLT. | |
| 8 | SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT | |
| 8.1 | Peer Review report. Five staff visited Crofty – then we sent six staff to Gloucestershire. We chose the areas for them to review and overall was really valuable process. 1. SEND and Inclusion – noted the impact of our Trust Lead. 2. Maths – came out very positively. Collaboration working well but mixed-age planning is a challenge in our smaller schools. We have developed a new plan in readiness for September and have learnt from GLA's approach. <i>Q: Do you plan to stick to same peer review partner?</i> Yes at least for next few years. We have developed a very strong level of trust between us which means we can have robust professional discussions. | |
| 8.2 | SIG Committee 15 May | |
| 8.2.1 | KB provided a summary of topics covered including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leadership arrangements for the five small school hub schools • new Arbor system is allowing easier sharing of data but the need to check if all data entry is correct has been identified • Trust Lead for Attendance and Behaviour will provide some monitoring guidance for LGCs • Committee noted the breadth of staff welfare-related activity which takes place in our schools and felt the Board as a whole may not always be aware of this • Communications between schools and parents was discussed including need to assess how effective the piloting of the new Arbor app has been to date • Next round of Crofty Awards to be linked with LGC Chairs training awards too | |
| 8.2.2 | Local governance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently 5 of 19 LGCs do not have a local governor as Chair. This figure prompted a wide ranging discussion which covered the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Should we look at other options for addressing this persistent issue – including reviewing the current role itself? ○ Review our expectations of volunteers – most of whom will know more about their community than education ○ Acknowledge too that by definition half of our parents are 'below average' and may need a different approach than the average governor / trustee? ○ New monitoring framework has potential to make role of governor and Chair easier in the future ○ Making regular minor adjustments can make it difficult to measure the impact compared to just a few big adjustments • Committee members visited 15 schools last term • Review of latest LGC feedback – more pos comments – but noticed some info available | |

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| | KB thanked VS for a very quick turnaround of the minutes. | |
| 8.2.3 | Governor Conference. Confirmation date has been brought forward to Saturday 13 September . Plan is to provide more guidance and training on the new LGC monitoring framework in advance of the first LGC meeting cycle. | |
| 9 | AOB | |
| 9.1 | PS noted that for the recent Trustee visits to school he had been provided with information sheets – including photos – which had been really helpful. He suggested having these for every school and any Trustee would be useful. | JA/JH |
| 9.2 | Vice Chair appointment process. Timescale for this is at the final July Board meeting. MH explained that in advance of a known period of transition for both the Trust and the Board he is thinking of seeking to appoint two Vice Chairs. This would be an interim arrangement to provide more capacity and flexibility. He would welcome any further comment from Trustees before the end of June. | ALL |
| 10 | Confidential item | |
| | Meeting finished at 3.15 | |

| Dates of next meetings | |
|------------------------|--------------|
| 13 June | Members |
| 1 July | FAR |
| 7 July | SIG |
| 9 July | Strategy Day |
| 15 July | BOARD |