

Minutes

OAT Board of Trustees

Date: 9 July 2020

Time: 17:00

Location: Microsoft Teams

Present:

Paul Hann	PH	Chair
Nick Hudson	THE CEO	CEO and Trustee
Janet Renou	JR	Trustee
Andrew Jones	AJ	Trustee
Mark Stanyer	MS	Executive Principal and Trustee
Peter Murray	PM	Trustee and Founding Chair
Kate Rutherford	KR	Executive Principal and Trustee
Frances Hall	FH	Trustee
Ian Brookman	IB	Trustee
Bal Samra	BS	Trustee

In attendance:

Sunita Yardley–Patel	SYP	Clerk
Diana Murray	DM	Ormiston Trust
James Murray	JM	CEO, Ormiston Trust
Rob Pritchard	RP	National Director of Education
Jo Dawson	JD	National Director of Finance
Tuesday Humby	TH	National Director Teaching and Training
Carmel Brown	CB	National Director People and Projects
James Miller	JMi	National Director Estates and IT

Minutes:

Part	Discussion	Action
1	Welcome, introductions and apologies	
	The Chair outlined that the education sector feels more co-operative during the COVID 19 pandemic and has been more willing to share ideas and best practice which has been positive.	
2	Minutes from the previous extraordinary meeting	
	12 March 2020 meeting minutes: change Financial Oversight and Risk (FOR) minutes from 'approved' to 'noted'. Minutes approved.	
	10 and 24 June 2020 meeting minutes: approved	

	Matter arising – FOR to consider catch-up funding in next meeting.	
3	CEO Report	
	<p>The CEO outlined the commitment from staff to ensuring that schools have continued to operate effectively throughout the pandemic period. Work completed by principals leading academies through the period was also praised. The CEO further outlined the need to reflect on the changes that have taken place during the period and how to retain and develop the positive practices developed since lockdown began.</p> <p>Virtual meetings have brought colleagues together to work in real-time which has overcome the barrier of academy geography and brought the Trust closer together</p> <p>The Trustees affirmed and encouraged this new way of working.</p>	
4	Strategy Review	
	<p>The CEO outlined the purpose of the strategy review: looking back on achievements since the implementation of the strategy and looking forward to key priorities for the next 12-18months.</p> <p>The CEO outlined the progress against priorities and how progress has been tracked and rated.</p> <p>The Trustees noted that the two areas that require development are parental engagement and emotional health These should continue to be priorities in the coming months as absence rates, mental health and wellbeing have been key issues during the pandemic.</p> <p>The CEO responded that collective work across the Trust on these two areas has not yet been completed and OAT needs to consider developing parental engagement processes with schools. Work around mental health has started, and additional work is being undertaken to establish the resources required to consistently and strategically support Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) in schools.</p> <p>The Trustees asked whether it would be appropriate to do an audit of where best practice is currently happening in academies to support the various areas of SEMH. Ormiston Trust would be willing to support this if required. The CEO confirmed that this would be useful.</p> <p>The CEO advised there will be a recalibration of targets to be presented to the September Board meeting depending on the situation with COVID 19.</p> <p>The Executive Team joined the meeting.</p> <p>The National Director of Education</p> <p>The National Director of Education outlined the key achievements from the past 12 months including:</p>	

- improvements in key academies,
- the appointment of Regional Lead Practitioners and
- the appointment of the Director of Primary and SEND.

The National Director of Education has also overseen a more aligned approach to best practice between regional directors as well as the implementation of consistent processes, for example, Curriculum Led Financial Planning (CLFP).

The Trustees asked what the reaction had been to CLFP.

The National Director for Education responded that there are varied views across the Trust. Next academic year the work will be completed using a more sophisticated approach.

The Trustees requested that the positive narrative of CLFP be clearly outlined in further communication and discussed how to move CLFP forward through working with the Trustees, the Executive and principals .

The National Director of Teaching and Training

The National Director of Teaching and Training outlined key achievements from the past 12 months including:

- the current position for the Oaks
- an update on Ignite
- the development of 17 subject networks and
- The development of a CPD leadership pathway.

There has also been work on the new Ofsted framework, curriculum development, enrichment and #iWill.

The Trustees asked how the vocational offer will continue

The National Director of Teaching and Training responded that this is still an option, but the parameters will need to be confirmed.

The National Director of Estates and IT

The National Director of Estates and IT outlined the projects that have been completed this year including new builds, expansion projects, sports pitches and improving site security. The National Director of Estates and IT has also successfully appointed a DPO and a new central tenancy for ICT.

The Trustees noted the good work and asked that procurement policy thresholds are reviewed to allow some capital builds to go ahead without FOR approval.

The National Director of Finance outlined that this is being reviewed and will be sent to FOR in September. There was a discussion about the new capital funding proposal from the government and how OAT can ensure securing of funds.

The National Director of People and Projects

The National Director of People and Projects outlined the work completed this year including:

- the implementation of pay scales
- holiday pay for support staff
- moving all staff to the same HR policies
- restructuring,
- ongoing casework,
- new appointments to head office,
- a Trust-wide Applicant Tracking System,
- trade union relationship management,
- corporate website management,
- branding and profile raising and
- internal comms and COVID 19 communications.

The Trustees commended the consistency of processes and policies.

The National Director of Finance

The National Director of Finance outlined the work completed including the recruitment of new finance team members, aligning finance processes across the Trust to ensure consistency, amending budgets and improving budget process to improve assurance of reserve achievement and a new decision-making framework.

FOR have endorsed the presentations made.

OAT 8

The CEO outlined the OAT 8 which reflects the strategy and how finances will support this. The impact of COVID 19 has been factored into this. More work will be completed on OAT expectations and what it means to be an OAT academy.

Trustees asked whether there should be a target on progress as well as attainment and how the focus will encompass all students.

The CEO responded that there needs to be balance between acknowledging attainment whilst ensuring progress is made.

The National Director of Education added that steps have been taken to support SEMH and Safeguarding reintegration in September. Education outcomes will continue to be a priority, with a desire to recruit high quality teaching candidates. There will be an increased capacity for academy support through RLPs and there are recovery plans for COVID19 in place, with a particular focus on attendance, behaviour and exclusions.

The National Director of Teaching and Training outlined the support that OAT will put in place for teachers and students. Enrichment will

be a higher priority going forward with additional funding for a comprehensive enrichment programme to be embedded in the curriculum.

The National Director of Estates and IT outlined the plans for next year including consistent approaches to hygiene and cleaning, building compliance and energy consumption. IT work will focus on sharing best practice, developing and ensuring robust plans are in place for disaster recovery.

The National Director of People and Projects outlined plans for the year ahead including a focus on employee wellbeing, communications with all staff, a review of pay-scales across the organisation, the launch of applicant tracking system, communication systems, work on behaviours, promoting good news strategies, website standardisation and raising the profile of OAT through events.

Trustees asked what is being done on parental engagement, particularly in light of returning to school.

The National Director of People and Projects responded that more work will be completed on this over the summer with the communications team and PLMR.

The National Director of Finance outlined the future plans for finance including developing a strong team, working on governance and a holistic approach to risk.

The Chair of FOR advised that the FOR committee had scrutinised the plans for next year and FOR is content with these plans.

The CEO outlined that the areas of focus that have been developed. There need to be plans to repurpose budgets in order to facilitate effective progress.

The National Director of Finance outlined how an integrated financial plan will support delivery of the strategy. The budget deadline has been extended so this will be finalised in September 2020.

The National Director of Finance outlined the current budget figures and the plans to put savings from this year back into supporting students in schools. The National Director of Finance further outlined the plans for 2021-22 and 2022-23 finances.

The Chair of FOR outlined the discussions that have recently taken place in FOR in relation to the financial plans outlined by the National Director of Finance including catch-up funding, reserves position and CLFP.

Trustees noted that the proposal appears both positive and transformational which is positive and asked that the investment numbers continue to grow.

	<p>Trustees asked for increased focus on risk surrounding the financial plan and consideration of financial assets, income generation, overheads and property ownership.</p> <p>The CEO responded that property ownership is currently being surveyed across the Trust, including income generation, and financial assets.</p>	
6	Decision Making Framework	
	<p>The National Director of Finance has worked with the Education Team and the Executive Team to put together the decision framework, aligning it with risk and clarifying ownership.</p> <p>There was a discussion about how Trustees will review the decision-making framework at committee level. Trustees requested clarity regarding governor accountability. The National Director of Finance outlined that the framework provides clarity of responsibility and highlights the importance of governors, particularly in challenging principals at a local level.</p> <p>There was a discussion about the need to ensure clear accountability between the governance layers and to ensure continued appointment of high-quality governors.</p> <p>There was a discussion about safeguarding accountability at Trust Board level and it was noted that safeguarding should be moved from FOR's remit to the remit of School Improvement Sub-committee (SIS).</p> <p>SIS to review decision making framework at the next meeting.</p>	
7	Policies	
	<p>The Trustees discussed the policy approval process and asked the SEND and NQT policy be sent to SIS before approval by the Trust Board.</p> <p>The remaining policies were approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Child Protection and Safeguarding ▪ Exclusions Policy ▪ Supporting Students with Medical Needs ▪ Children Missing Education ▪ Reserves policy 	
8	People committee Terms of Reference	
	<p>The Chair of the Trust Board outlined the disbandment of the Remuneration Committee and the reason for a new 'People Committee'.</p>	

	<p>There was a discussion about the development of the Terms of Reference (TORs) and the changes made based on feedback.</p> <p>The TORs were approved.</p>	
9	For info	
	<p>Minutes from the following committees were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Audit Minutes 12.02.20 ▪ Audit minutes 13.05.20 ▪ FOR minutes 12.02.20 ▪ Remuneration Minutes 17.06.20 ▪ SIS minutes 03.03.20 ▪ SIS minutes 05.05.20 ▪ SIS minutes 24.06.20 	
10	AOB	
	<p>There was a discussion about committee titles and changing FOR to Finance Committee and Audit Committee to Audit and Risk Committee.</p> <p>Alastair Thom has been appointed to the Finance Committee.</p>	
11	Date of next meeting:	
	<p>The next meeting will be held on 10 September 2021.</p> <p>Proposed further dates: 10 December 2020, 11 March 2021, 8 July 2021</p>	