

Minutes of Board Meeting

Date:	Thursday 9 th December	Time:	09:30 – 12:30
Location:	Teams	Clerk:	Sunita Yardley- Patel
Present:	Paul Hann – Trustee (Chair) Frances Hall – Trustee Nick Hudson – Trustee (CEO) Andrew Jones – Trustee Jan Renou – Trustee Bal Samra – Trustee Karen Bramwell – Trustee Ian Brookman – Trustee Peter Murray – Trustee	Attendees:	Jo Dawson (National Director of Finance) Maria Reraki

	Item	Action
1.	Welcome, introductions and apologies	
	<p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Maria Reraki as a new potential trustee. Maria outlined relevant background and experience to the trustee role.</p> <p>The Chair noted the success of the recent OAT conference and updated trustees on the strategy session that took place with principals at the conference and the follow-up conversation with the Principal Review Group (PRG). The attendees at the conference session and further reflections at the PRG led to the clear view that the OAT values should remain the same.</p> <p>The Chair further highlighted the positive feedback from the principals and the areas for improvement identified by the PRG. It was noted that follow-up on key issues raised has already taken place.</p>	
2.	Minutes and matters arising	
	The minutes were approved subject to an addition of a missing word from clause 6.	

	<p>Trustees asked for an update on operational effectiveness. The National Director of Finance responded that there will be an update on this sent to the January strategy meeting. Trustees noted that this update should consider the delivery of the strategy with consideration of the partnership fee and a communications plan.</p>	
<p>3.</p>	<p>CEO Report</p>	
	<p>The CEO highlighted the Ofsted inspections that have taken place across the Trust in the first term. The CEO further outlined that there is still the intention by the inspectorate to complete MAT reviews from the spring term and preparations are underway to ensure readiness should OAT be inspected. There will also be a CST external review of governance taking place in the spring term, further details and dates will be circulated to trustees.</p> <p>There was a discussion about a complaint currently submitted to Ofsted and the current disquiet in the wider education sector regarding Ofsted inspections. Particularly in relation to the application of the inspection framework with not enough regard for the impact of covid. There is currently an unprecedented number of complaints to Ofsted. There have also been questions on the necessity of MATSEs (Multi-Academy Trust Summary Evaluations) when the sector is already under substantial pressure.</p> <p>There was a discussion about the scope of the CST external review of governance and trustees agreed to complete a skills audit in advance of this.</p> <p>The CEO reiterated that following discussions with stakeholders there has been a move to keep the values the same as they currently are. The purpose has had more in-depth discussion, highlights of which included conversations about employability and enrichment.</p> <p>Trustees asked for a slider scale of proposals to the January strategy meeting and encouraged that this be an open meeting with not too much paperwork prepared.</p> <p>Trustees asked what actions have been taken to address the changes to Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) legislation and guidance that has come into force this year.</p> <p>The CEO responded that there has been a move to address HSB more rigorously in academies. More detailed work has been done on this around support and training for staff and students. There is a cultural shift which assumes that HSB takes place and embedding a no-tolerance culture that takes HSB seriously. It was agreed that SIS will receive a more detailed report on the actions taken to address HSB.</p> <p>Trustees asked what safeguarding practice is like across the Trust.</p> <p>The CEO responded that there is particularly strong practice in some academies and good practice in most. Where there have been areas identified for improvement, these are being followed up.</p> <p><u>Education Team Structure</u></p>	<p>SYP</p>

<p>The CEO outlined the revised Education Team structure and timeline. There was a particular focus on the need to further support inclusion and a clearer focus on school improvement by increasing the number of people in the Education Team and how the team operates. There is also a need for specific, focussed primary support. If the decision is taken to expand the primary section the primary lead will be responsible for driving expansion.</p>	
<p>Trustees asked that the restructure be an agenda item at both F&C and People Committee</p>	
<p>There was a discussion about the timing of the new structure in relation to the development of the strategy. It was agreed that the structure should take priority because it will be vital to consider inclusion in the Education Strategy and will support the better workload and oversight of inclusion and school improvement.</p>	
<p>There was a discussion about cost vs oversight and whether there may be possible temporary solutions that could be in place until the strategy is agreed.</p>	
<p>Trustees asked how the curriculum oversight for primary and secondary would be overseen between the SI and Teaching and Training Teams.</p>	
<p>The CEO responded that the two teams will work together</p>	
<p>Trustees asked whether there would be a separate lead for primary and secondary.</p>	
<p>The CEO responded that there would not because the capacity would be increased due to the additional responsibility of primary school improvement.</p>	
<p>There was a discussion about the rationale behind the reporting lines that have been proposed and the need for continual review throughout the development of the structure.</p>	
<p>Trustees agreed that the structure proposed is acceptable subject to further discussions at People Committee and F&C Committee.</p>	<p>NH</p>
<p><u>IPR</u></p>	
<p>The CEO asked for guidance from trustees on a calendar for IPR information and how regularly the information should be communicated.</p>	
<p>Trustees agreed that the data presented is necessary but requested more interpretation of metrics and more narrative of data to assure trustees that oversight of the key data and understanding of implications and next steps. There is also a need to be aware of the inspectorate's focus on the data and assurance that is presented by the Trust Board. There was a discussion about the change to the relevance of some data presented given the context of covid. Attendance and attainment for example are less relevant than they have been previously and there needs to be work completed on the data presented in the IPR given the change in issues arising for children. The CEO confirmed that this is being completed and will be shared with SIS.</p>	<p>NH</p>
<p>The CEO confirmed that the data should go in a more formal way to each of the sub-committees and the information format presented differently at future</p>	<p>NH</p>

	<p>board meetings. The CEO will pick up with individual trustees outside of the board meeting.</p> <p>There was a discussion about the Trust’s approach to audit and ensuring that areas for development are audited demonstrating transparency.</p>	
4.	Financial Accounts and External Audit	
	<p>Audit Findings Report</p> <p>The Chair of the Audit & Risk presented the audit findings report.</p> <p>Trustees asked for more detail about the status of the Forge ownership – the Chair of Audit and Risk outlined that there is some paperwork missing and lawyers are currently engaged to register the property as belonging to Forge.</p> <p>It was proposed and agreed that the Management Accounts be shared monthly with the Full Board of Trustees. Trustees also asked that the CEO include regular finance updates within the trustee weekly note.</p> <p><u>Financial statements/annual report</u></p> <p>The Chair of Audit and Risk outlined some of the decisions around wording in the report and thanked everyone that had been involved in the composing of the document.</p> <p><u>Letters of recommendation</u></p> <p>Trustees approved the content.</p> <p><u>Going Concern</u></p> <p>The Chair of Audit and Risk confirmed that OAT is a going concern for the next 12 months.</p> <p>Trustees asked if there is a risk to government funding being reduced or withdrawn as a result of the current climate? There was a discussion about reserves management..</p> <p>The CEO outlined the Trust’s financial reserves in the context of the sector and assured trustees that OAT’s reserves are not high in the national context.</p> <p>The trustees agreed contentment with the annual report and delegation to the CEO and Chair of the Board to sign-off on behalf of the trustees.</p>	<p>JD</p> <p>NH</p>
5.	Financial Status Update & Next Steps	
	<p>The Chair of F&C presented the Financial Performance Update highlighting the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strong reserves at the 20/21 year end noting that this was in line with expectations given the impact of the pandemic and the timing of Estates and ICT lifecycle planning decisions. • 21/22 year end reserves are forecasted to be in line with budget due to planned expenditure on school improvement, targeted recovery, 	

	<p>investment in inclusion, estates and ICT lifecycle planning work together with the need to absorb realised risks in terms of higher energy and employer NI costs together.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bottom-up forecasting was taking place in December. • Further allocation of remaining contingency would be approved in February. It was likely that this would relate to ICT, Estates and additional counsellors. <p>Trustees asked what direction is going to be taken for ICT infrastructure?</p> <p>There was a discussion about ICT infrastructure for teaching versus ICT infrastructure to support business operations.</p> <p>The National Director of Finance outlined that planning has been taking place around infrastructure in relation to ICT. Wider ICT strategy on delivery of education is a longer-term consideration. The CEO outlined that hybrid working is taking place as a norm and this can be strengthened with additional technology.</p> <p>It was noted that funding would need to be set aside to implement the new strategy.</p>	
6.	Policies	
	<p>The Company Secretary outlined the proposed policies for approval noting the changes that have been made in reviewing the policies. The following policies were approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attendance ▪ Behaviour for Learning ▪ Admissions ▪ Health and safety 	
7.	For Info	
	The minutes from all sub-committees were received.	
8.	AOB	
	The Trustees agreed to appoint Maria Reraki as a Trustee.	
9.	Date of next meeting	
	<p>26th January - Board Strategy Meeting 10th February - Board Training and Development 10th March - Board Meeting followed by AGM</p>	