

Minutes of the Trust Board Meeting

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| Date: | Thursday 13 th July 2023 | Time: | 10.30 am – 1.30 pm |
| Location: | Cubitt Suite, Hilton London Euston, 17-18 Upper Woburn Place, London, WC1H 0HT | Clerk: | Sunita Yardley-Patel Head of Governance/CoSec |

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| Trustees Present: | | Attendees: | |
| Julius Weinberg | Chair | Jo Dawson | National Director of Finance and Strategy |
| Karen Bramwell | Trustee | James Miller | National Director of Estates and Technology |
| Nick Hudson | Trustee and CEO | | |
| Peter Murray | Trustee | Apologies: | |
| Janet Renou | Trustee | Frances Hall | Trustee |
| Stuart Ross | Trustee | Bal Sharma | Trustee |
| | | Alistair Thom | Trustee |

| No. | Item | Action |
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| 1. | <p>Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and accepted apologies from</p> <p>Frances Hall Trustee</p> <p>Bal Sharma Trustee</p> <p>Alistair Thom Trustee</p> | |
| 2. | <p>Declarations, Minutes and Matters Arising</p> <p>2.1 Declaration of Interests – no new declarations</p> <p>2.2 Approval of Minutes – Minutes from March meeting (09.03.23) and extraordinary April meeting (19.04.23) approved.</p> <p>2.3 Matters Arising/Action Log – updates all in line with the action log shared.</p> | |
| 3. | <p>Chair's Report</p> <p>3.1 Chair's Update – The Chair outlined that trustees are scheduling school visits for next year. The Chair also updated that he attended the Principals' Forum where he conducted a Q&A with principals chaired by the National Director of Education.</p> <p>3.2 Principals Review Group – The minutes of the most recent meeting of the PRG were made available as part of the meeting pack.</p> <p>Chairs Review Group – The minutes of the most recent meeting of the CRG were made available as part of the meeting pack. The CRG was positive and the issues raised related to communications to/from the LGB and some issues with clarification of role. There should be representation from the West on the CRG if possible. There will be an informal note from Chair of Trust Board to chairs of governors after the Trust Board meeting.</p> | |
| 4. | CEO Report | |

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| | <p>The CEO's report was distributed ahead of the meeting for information and review and therefore it was taken as read. The CEO highlighted key points and responded to questions from Trustees.</p> <p>The CEO reflected on the past year. It was noted that there has been significant change to the head office staff team, particularly in leadership, and with the new CEO incoming the Trust is in a period of transition. The CEO outlined the induction programme that has taken place so far for the incoming CEO, who will become the Accounting Officer from 1st September 2023.</p> <p>The CEO outlined an update on the change to the IPR report format which will now be called the Strategic Progress Report.</p> <p>There was a discussion about the recent positive Ofsted results.</p> <p>The CEO outlined the KS2 results and the positive picture across the majority of the Trust. There was a discussion about the areas where improvement is required and what mechanisms are in place to support this.</p> <p>There was an update on potential growth avenues and the due diligence findings were shared with trustees.</p> <p>It was noted that there are many capital works taking place over the summer.</p> <p>Trustees asked for an updated on reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC)? The National Director of Estates and Technology responded that the school sites were surveyed by the Trust and none was found. The DfE checked Ormiston Venture Academy because there was a belief that there may be some there but none was found.</p> <p>Trustees asked how recruitment issues are being addressed? The CEO responded that this is the biggest challenge for the sector at the moment. The Trust needs to consider how to employ people differently. The CEO outlined that he will Chair a future CST meeting to ascertain from sector partners how to reduce costs and improve recruitment and retention. It was noted that some trusts are running in-house supply agencies. There are also conversations taking place in-house to reform workforce structure to support sustainability, recruitment and retention. This might include a strong approach to flexible working. It was suggested that a future board meeting should look at recruitment and retention (Dec meeting).</p> <p>Trustees suggested that developing the profile of the Trust would also assist; it was noted that this would be helpful if the Trust had a profile for being the most flexible Trust. There was a discussion about the validity and attraction of local reputation as well as national profile.</p> <p>Trustees asked whether the recruitment and retention issue was just national or international too. The CEO responded that this is likely to be the case.</p> | |
| 5. | <p>CFO Report</p> <p>The CFO presented the Budget Forecast Return (BFR). The CFO outlined the process that has taken place to consult with schools on budget agreement. These conversations have focused on academy development plans, risks and the impact of school improvement actions. It was noted that the process for consulting with schools for budget approval is getting stronger.</p> | |

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| | <p>The CFO presented the financial risks and noted the long-term risk around future pupil projections and the more immediate risks around pay, agency costs and alternative provision.</p> <p>The CFO noted that reserves were planned to be above 4%, the minimum target previously agreed with Trustees in December. The CFO noted that this was the “new minimum target” for most trusts and 4-6% is generally considered an acceptable level with some trusts having reserves as high as 20%.</p> <p>Trustees asked whether the issue with the finances for AP London schools is still an ongoing issue?</p> <p>The CFO explained that London academies were breaking even in total and that adequate funding had been received from the DfE to cover the cost of restructuring. The CFO also explained how positive relationships had been developed with key stakeholders e.g. feeder schools and LA’s and that the Foundation and had been maintained and renamed.</p> <p>Trustees asked whether the pattern of isolated schools have more difficult projected budgets is contributing to the staff costs increase to 84% over a target of 80%.</p> <p>The CFO explained that there was not always a clear correlation with some standalone and/ or coastal schools being highly effective and efficient. However, it was reasonable to assume that coastal schools did experience different staffing challenges to those in inner cities and/ or those in clusters.</p> <p>The Chair of F&C endorsed the report and outlined the challenge and scrutiny that had taken place in both the staff team and F&C Committee</p> <p>Trustees asked whether there is adequate funding for youth social action? The CFO responded that this was planned for within the financial plans and fundraising work.</p> <p>Trustees acknowledged the hard work that had gone into producing the Budget Forecast across the Trust and within the Finance Team</p> <p>The BFR was approved by Trustees.</p> | |
| | <p>Fundraising</p> <p>The CFO presented the fundraising paper and highlighted the key grants that have been secured and the opportunities that are being explored. It was noted that the next steps on fundraising will be presented at the September board meeting.</p> <p>Trustees asked about the tender for fundraising consultants? The CFO responded that the process was followed in line with internal policy and has resulted in the appointment of consultants that will support the organisation in meeting fundraising goals.</p> <p>Trustees asked who does fundraising well in the education sector? The CFO responded that much of the fundraising performed by peer trusts is driven through trustee networks. The CFO also noted that there are a number of high performing MATs that perform no external fundraising and have established high level reserves through the early implementation of efficient operating structures.</p> <p>There was a discussion about the options for charity fundraising.</p> | |

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| 6. | <p>Governance and Policies</p> <p>Trustee candidate:</p> <p>The Trustees discussed a potential new trustee and alternative perspectives that the potential candidate will bring to the board, particularly in relation to workshop development.</p> <p>The appoint of Tariq Syed as a Trustee was approved.</p> <p>The following were approved with some minor changes requested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scheme of Delegation - LGB Terms of Reference - Trust Board sub-committee Terms of Reference - Policy approvals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Child Protection and Safeguarding - Reserves - SEND Policy - Attendance Policy - Exclusions Policy - Complaints Policy | |
| 7. | <p>Committee Minutes</p> <p>All committee minutes were noted.</p> | |
| 8. | <p>AOB</p> <p>The Chair thanked the CEO for his service to Ormiston Academies Trust noting that he has been a pleasure to work with and wishes him all the best in retirement. The Chair of Ormiston Trust noted that it would be a loss to the Trust. The CEO expressed his thanks to the board for their support and challenge.</p> | |
| 9. | <p>Dates of future meetings and close</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 28th September 2023 (London) ▪ 14th December 2023 (London) ▪ 1st February 2024 (T&D Session) ▪ 7th March 2024 (London) ▪ 23rd May 2024 (T&D Session) ▪ 11th July 2024 (London) | |