

Ethos Committee – Part I Minutes							
Date/Time	22 nd September 2020 4.00pm	Location		Virtual (Microsoft Team)			
Attendees	Initials			Attendees	Initials		
Morgen Witzel	MW	John Lawlor	JL	Jane Dumeresque	JD	Graham Briscoe	GB
Tania Skeaping	TS						

Apologies	Initials	Reason	
Daryll Chapman	DC	Work Commitment	ACTIONS
Jeanette Savage	JS	Family matter	DECISIONS
			QUESTIONS AND CHALLENGES

In Attendance	Initials	Position
Susanne Kiff	SK	CFOO
Dan Morrow	DM	Associate Trustee
Hazel Fox	HF	Vice CEO
Sarah Jones	SJ	Principal, Tavistock College
Melissa Trudgill	MT	Governance Manager

Meeting started at 4.05pm

(The meeting was recorded for the purposes of minute taking and was destroyed on 02.10.20)

1 - Apologies
Daryll Chapman and Jeanette Savage gave their apologies for the meeting and these were sanctioned.
2 – Declaration of Interest
All Trustees present were reminded to declare any conflict of interest that may arise during the meeting.
3 – Agree and Sign off Previous Minutes
Minutes from: Ethos Committee meeting held on 11th June 2020 were agreed and will be signed as correct by MW, after the Covid 19 crisis.
4 – Matters arising.
Not much progress on actions expected due to Covid and summer break.

- HR Report on staff absences – SK confirmed that absences were being coded differently (Covid and non-Covid). MW said this would act as a health check following the return to work after Covid lockdown.

ACTION: SK will provide HR report on staff absences during the Autumn Term.

- GB reminded that there should be an annual HR report for Trustees as a requirement. DM confirmed that the Pay committee would normally receive this report.

ACTION: SK/GT Annual HR report to come to Trust Board (time to be confirmed).

- Ethos in the curriculum – HF has asked Neil Swaint to have a remote look at this and how it has been reflected through the websites. Headteachers have been asked, but this work has just started. This will be brought to the next meeting when there is more detail.

ACTION: HF to report on how ethos is reflected in the curriculum at December Meeting.

- Student Charter- in the summer term, HF had held a school council meeting, but feels that further work needs to be done about what the Trust means to students. She emphasised the importance of ensuring that all children's voices were heard rather than just those who were members of student councils. DM wanted this to be framed tightly with the headteachers group before it involves stakeholders and that the approach is laid out carefully from each school. HF confirmed that a task and finish group with students on it would be useful and this could be started in January.
- TOR – needs to reflect other religions and minority groups and equality needs another look at. Students should also be involved to look at this.
- **Q GB asked whether it would be useful for the Board to have a training and education session on the curriculum changes prior to a Board meeting?** DM suggested training for Trustees on new initiatives so that they are current with what is occurring in the system, but highlighted the importance of this not becoming operational. DM confirmed that this is a sign posting issue and Trustees could be informed of new initiatives in the CEO report; at times it might be appropriate for training sessions.

5 – Matters brought forward at the direction of the Chair

Foundation Trustee – TS confirmed that a candidate had been interviewed recently and his application form was on SharePoint for Trustees' information. Preliminary approval would be sought at the next Trustees meeting. The application would then go to the Diocesan committee for their consideration. The Members would also need to give their approval and DBS checks completed, before formal appointment. Pete Last was a practising Christian and also had a strong background in education.

6 – Discussion on the Ethos of the Trust and its vision and values.

Sarah Jones, Principal of Tavistock College was invited to the meeting. She spoke about the background and history of the National Cooperative Alliance and its principles. She reminded the meeting that the Trust was intended to be members driven (members = our community, alumni, parents, staff and governance - all as stakeholder groups). She outlined the transformational impact of being a co-operative and reiterated that principles are critical and are the pillars upon which the values are based; the values cannot be separated from the pillars the principle of the cooperative movement. It is the schools' job to bring those values alive and it is the job of the Trustees to be the custodians of the co-operative movement. The DMAT Statement of Intent, which SJ had written had been circulated to Trustees prior to the meeting.

She raised the following concerns:

- Values are more than words; they are deeds and should be lived not recited.
- The membership should be doing the monitoring.
- Reactive practise not enough proactive practise.
- Co constructing what the school might be like; being in charge of your own CPD
- Not about sharing but about transforming.

SJ concluded by asking for a discussion around returning to a membership-driven solution to our problems and how to grow a democratic fellowship and believe in it.

The following comments and questions were made:

- **Q MW stated that any kind of relationship within an organisation depends on Trust – what would SJ do to build more trust within the MAT?** SJ believes that the starting point is the opportunity to believe in the membership and feels that the membership currently is not understood or consulted adequately. She feels that communication is poor and must improve, but not through emails and paper. It was important to find mechanisms that listen rather than tell and co-construct what the future might be like.
- GB raised that the membership are customers and stakeholders, but that alongside this, the MAT is required to operate in a strict legal process which is closely monitored by government – the legal responsibility stops with the trustees. **Q In SJ's cooperative membership model – who would she see as the people responsible for the legal processes – the membership or the Trustees?** SJ believes that there is less likelihood in the first place of anyone making errors and proportioning blame if there is the right approach constructed, although she understands that the Trustees and Members hold the ultimate responsibility. SJ suggested revisiting the cooperative values even if it is not possible to formally adopt them.
- **Q DM added that we need to find our own language which represents the Trust and hence avoids confusion from using language which implies we have adopted the co-operative articles?** Language is important and DM wonders how the gap is bridged between those who are fully knowledgeable and committed to the co-operative values and for others who do not have the same commitment; the Trust wants members to believe in the values and find our own language.
- Student Charter and engaging with our children and communities – DM suggested that HF, SJ (or a colleague from Tavistock) and himself could begin with this piece of work and ask children first about their language and understanding which feeds up into our models. It needs to start with those who will be affected by it the longest – the children; we need to hear their authentic voices and then we will be able to go to the staff with a compelling proposition from them. DM said it was important that we ensure we have critical democratic fellowship. **Q How do we find the time and prioritisation and bring everyone along on the journey with us?**
- SJ offered a concise paper on democratic fellowship, which could be a 'think piece' particularly for governance and then can start with students with proactive exercises rather than reactive and manage the change effectively.
- **Q DM asked if SJ would join HF and himself in a regular discussion on this to incorporate in the planning and strategy for January.**

ACTION: DM, SJ and HF report back to the next Ethos Committee on their discussions on democratic fellowship and how to incorporate ideas into strategic planning for January.

- Everyone agreed that there had to be mechanisms to reach every child and although student councils played their part, the communication had to be on a much wider level.
- DM suggested the model of creating a school parliament which had equal numbers of representatives from each of the schools, regardless of the size of the school thus teaching children the practical examples of democracy and cooperative values.
- MW suggested inviting different Headteachers to future Ethos Committee meetings.

ACTION:MW/MT to invite a Headteacher to the next Ethos Committee meeting.

7 - Discuss Student Charter proposal

See above within discussion.

8 Review of the Committee and Tasks

8.1 Confirm the Committee's Terms of Reference

ACTION: MT to include JD's sentence about the green agenda and place on next agenda for approval.

The TOR will be reviewed further to include reference to other faiths and minority groups.

8.2 Self-Evaluation/Review

MW had created a paper which collated opinions from staff, parents and AC members around the Trust. Conclusion – MW feels we need to address communication across the MAT and the visibility of the Board and Trustees. Relationships need to be strengthened. There is a general sense that we are not yet a coherent organisation and that we are a collection of organisations under a formal umbrella. The next step is the consolidation phase.

- GB reported that he had developed a code of governance for MATs based on the charity version as part of a governance project for his recent NGA chairs developmental course which has now been accepted by the CST as a self-assessment document on their website. GB offered the committee the document to use as a self-assessment review tool.

ACTION: GB to circulate to MT/TS the self-assessment document.

- DM supported MW's view that it is a time issue of where we are as a MAT and there is an understanding of a need for change and a recognition of the potential.
- JD added that MW's paper had reflected on some of her concerns and she thanked MW for his extensive work in producing this.

8.3 Report back on Ethos leads at AC level following Ethos Leads Meeting

- MW had asked at the Ethos Leads Meeting what the participants wanted to do next and they had requested more meetings. MT/MW will schedule in regular meetings which presents another channel of communication. MW will open up the meeting for Trustees and staff.
- DM raised the idea that Ethos 'Leads' insinuates a hierarchy which is not in line with the ethos of the Trust and he preferred Ethos Champions. He also asked if this group might share their views on ethos and produce a newsletter which will celebrate all the good work which is going on. DM believes that the work on ethos needs to be revealed (what is actually happening rather than creating it). MW would ask the group what idea they would like to come up with rather than suggesting a newsletter.

ACTION: MW would ask at the next Ethos Leads Meeting, how they would like the ethos of the Trust to be more visible and reveal all the positive things taking place.**8.4 Monitoring performance and ethical standards**

- Food hampers rather than vouchers has reinforced the ethos in our communities in a practical way and MW thanked all those who had worked so hard on providing this service. **Q TS asked what would happen to this during the half term and Christmas holidays? Q DM said we have a legal obligation to provide for FSM children and families not attending school and are we observing this duty?** For those children not in school, catering services are made aware and it has been left to individual schools to deliver on this; SK would check on this. There had not been decisions made as yet about school holidays. The Trustees felt this was important to continue this service during the next holiday periods but it was suggested that the vouchers may need to be reconsidered as the hamper delivery may not be sustainable long term. DM confirmed that the voucher system had been extended in use now and it might be worthwhile to revisit it.

ACTION: SK to check that FSM children and families are being supplied with meals whilst off school and also to report back on the provision intended during holidays.**8.5 Self-evaluation of Trustee Board – methods and approaches**

MT and TS are keen to involve MW and his recent paper in future evaluation of the Board and undertake it before Christmas, if possible in conjunction with the paper/questionnaire from GB.

8.6 Monitor communications between DMAT, ACs, pupils, parishes and local communities in light of the Covid crisis

- DM voiced that he felt the content of some of the websites could be improved and he may initiate some review as there is inaccurate information. He feels that there is very little information on them with how the Trust has responded positively as a family of schools to Covid, which would be positive news.

- JD and TS had asked DC to draft communications to use in a case of positive Covid case so the Trust is prepared for this eventuality.
- HF wants to relaunch the Trust Bulletin; it emails out to every member of staff and it could be used a lot more. **Q GB asked whether feedback was received on those who did not open it?** SK confirmed yes.

Monitoring progress/achievement of DMAT pupils including underachieving groups (SEND/PP etc)

HF reported that she had met with Headteachers and calendars has been synchronised for assessment points, but that this year, it was not about data but triangulation of deep dive, talking to children and staff and ensuring children are enjoying their learning and feel they are progressing. HF wants Headteachers to be confident to talk about their SEN children and the way they are progressing. The wellbeing of the children is critical.

HF has met with SENCOs and outlined the set of questions and quality assurance which will be asked later on in the term, and advised them about the quality assurance levels, which Jeanette Savage had recommended.

Discussion of safeguarding and behaviour policies

HF confirmed that Headteachers have reported that behaviour has been good but she wants to ensure that they have adopted the appendices to the Behaviour Policy.

Q TS asked if the Behaviour Policy with the updated appendices were not on

ACTION: MT to ensure with the Clerks that all schools had added the appendices on to the Behaviour Policy and that they are up to date on school websites.

8.2.7 Review of corporate governance and stakeholder governance at DMAT

MW had circulated 2 papers on this.

- **Q TS asked about a co-operative link trustee.** TS said it used to be RL and TS said there should be someone looking for this distinctiveness at Board level.
- TS said in the Articles there should be a recommendation that we go through an application re-election process for trustee's ad trustees would not automatically commence a subsequent term. In 2022 many of the Trustees will be coming to the end of their current term. GB said that he is aware of a template, which trustees who wish to stand for another term complete, addressing the following questions: 1) what have I done over the last 4 year, 2) What can I offer in support over the next 4 year and 3) Further comments. This ensures there is an audit trail and we have followed due diligence process for re-appointment. MW agreed it was important for self-reflection. This should also be included in self-evaluation of the Board.
- TS raised MW's previous idea of having a Parent Trustee on the Board with a discussion required on how this person would be elected fairly from so many children and families within the MAT. A discussion also ensued about having a Staff Trustee and all agreed that this individual would be elected by Trust Staff but not representing them. It would however bring a different perspective to the Board.
- MW asked if the committee were happy to bring this proposal to the Full Board (1 staff trustee (teaching), 1 staff trustee (support staff) and 1 parent trustee). JD raised that the only concern was with the addition of the new Trustees (who were undergoing the application/appointment process), the number of trustees was up to 12. The DfE recommends 7-12 trustees for MATs. JD felt that for a meeting to be effective then having too many participants, makes the meeting difficult to manage. GB reminded that people can be invited to attend for certain meetings and specialist areas/focuses and MW said another option was to consider this alongside natural wastage so as trustees retire or leave the board they are replaced with parent or staff trustees. He felt that it was important however to include a parent trustee as soon as possible. DW said that his current Trustee Board has parents but they are not there fulfilling a parent category and suggested that with 2 current trustees being parents that this would fulfil this consideration. HF said it was really important to try and involve some of the hard to reach parents and MW suggested that they could be co-opted if a suitable person could be found who had enough time.

ACTION: MT to agenda the idea of parent trustee at next Full Board Meeting and consideration of staff trustee when there becomes a vacancy on the Board. May require future change in Articles of Association?

9. Minutes of ethos committees across DMAT

DM commented on the irregularity of when these meetings occur and MW agreed that 2 of the 5 clusters do not have ethos meetings at all at the moment and this needs to be raised at the next ethos leads meeting. MW said there needs to be some representation and impact needs to be reviewed. Q GB wondered if Ethos was understood widely amongst the Trust's stakeholders and whether this was an area which people would not engage in because they did not fully understand its remit. A discussion continued regarding that the terminology used and it was agreed that ethos might be the wrong word to encourage all sections of the community.
10 Discussion of ethical icons
HF suggested equality or environmental work was threaded through reports and it would be useful to highlight these focuses with icons. She had sent some icons through to TS and MW and would try using the icons in future CEO reports.
11. Discussion on draft Link Trustee TOR
MW believes that the area on the draft TOR regarding confidentiality needs further discussion. He suggested that the Chairs of committees and the Full Board would just need to be clear what could be divulged at the end of their meetings, via link trustees to their delegated AC Board meetings. Devising a set of criteria of matters which were confidential (reports and minutes) just for the Trust Board and matters, which were not, would be helpful. JL suggested to take out monthly report and replaced with 'exception-based reporting' (areas which deviate widely for the expected or requiring immediate action).
12. Mental Health/Wellbeing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results of staff survey will be shared at a Full Trustee Board meeting this term. SK will share them asap. Q MW asked if there was a future plan to do another survey later in the term? HF reminded that there were alternative ways to gather these opinions. It was also important to feedback on the current survey, through the Trust Bulletin, to show that the staff have been heard and explain what the Trust will do to react to the survey results. • All agreed that picking up with staff through different channels should be undertaken rather than replicating surveys and also patterns in the survey results could be investigated further. • SK would also talk to Gill to consider reintroducing a set time each week when staff were invited to call in to voice any concerns that they had, as this had worked well previously. • DM suggested booking in supervision for Headteachers before leave time so they feel able to enjoy the break and have voiced concerns/off loaded before their leave. SK said she would research this being provided from external sources. • Q GB asked if there was a confidential HR helpline in place? SK confirmed that there was and trustees were also registered to be able to access it.
13. Risks identified/forthcoming changes
MW asked if there was anything that trustees wanted to urgently add to the risk register despite it going through a reinvention. There was nothing raised.
14. Date of Next Date of next meeting
3rd December 2020

The meeting ended at 6.04pm.

Action Table from 22.09.20		
MW/TS	Agree ethos content of annual report for last Full Trustees meeting in Summer Term 2.	Done – see below

AF	Annual report – use the existing document LGB Terms of Reference LGB and create a new AC document which will include the request for an annual report.	Done – see below
MW	To propose and hold a joint meeting with AC Leads on Ethos.	Done
HF	To create a log of when the last SIAMS inspections were and when the next ones are due.	DONE
MT	To continue to place this on the agenda during the Covid crisis. (Agenda item - Review of communications between DMAT, ACs, pupils, parishes and local communities in light of the Covid crisis	Done
MT/MW	To organise an additional meeting to review parents' questionnaires in early December.	DONE
MT	To send previous Ethos Committee report to MW as an example for this year's report.	ASAP
SK/GT	Trustees requested an annual HR report by the end of the year including giving feedback on staff absences and the reasons.	DEC Mtg
HF	To report back to the next ethos committee on how ethos is being brought into the curriculum in particular areas surrounding black lives matters and racial issues.	DEC Mtg
HF/MW/DM	To put a proposal together for a Student Charter with the suggested mechanics to get this to work and then MW/HF can speak to AC Chairs, Student Council and Headteachers.	Jan 2021
MW/HF	To check that other religions and ethnicities are embedded in the values of schools and then potentially change the TOR to reflect what we have in existence.	Jan 2021 (to include with above)
MT	To include JD's sentence into the TOR.	ASAP
MW	To invite pupils to have an input at future ethos committee meetings.	Next Mtg?
HF	To introduce the use of icons in her next Vice CEO report to highlight where ethical standards are addressed.	Autumn Term
MT	To add for future agendas 1. Reporting on steps being taken towards reducing carbon footprint and making schools more environmentally accountable 2. Steps being taken towards embedding environmental issues in the curriculum.	DEC Mtg
MW	To discuss with ACs the idea of nominating Environmental Leads/individuals could be found within schools i.e. people who have a genuine interest or expertise in this area which could be shared.	ASAP
HF	To email to MT a copy of the log for Trustees information	ASAP
MT	To add this item to the next agenda - Guidance notes for non-Church Schools	DEC Mtg
DM/SJ/HF	To report back to the next Ethos Committee on their discussions on democratic fellowship and how to incorporate ideas into strategic planning for January.	DEC Mtg
MW/MT	MW/MT to invite a Headteacher to the next Ethos Committee meeting.	ASAP
MT	To include JD's sentence about the green agenda and place on next agenda for approval.	ASAP
GB	To circulate to MT/TS the self-assessment document to be included as part of Board evaluation schedule.	ASAP
MW	To ask at the next Ethos Leads Meeting, how Schools and ACs would like the ethos of the Trust to be more visible and reveal all the positive things taking place.	NOV Mtg (Ethos Leads)
SK	To check that FSM children and families are being supplied with meals whilst off school and also to report back on the provision intended during holidays.	ASAP
MT	To ensure with the Clerks that all schools had added the appendices on to the Behaviour Policy and that they are up to date on school websites.	
MT	To place on the agenda the idea of parent trustee at next Full Board Meeting and consideration of staff trustee when there becomes a vacancy on the Board	22.10.20