

Full Trustee Board (School Improvement Focus) – Part I Minutes							
Date/Time	22nd October 2020 4.00pm	Location		Wardhayes, Okehampton College and Virtual via Microsoft Team (due to Covid 19)			
Attendees	Initials			Attendees	Initials		
Morgen Witzel	MW	Tania Skeaping	TS	Philip Sanders	PS	Jeanette Savage	JS
John Lawlor	JL	Jane Dumeresque	JD	Graham Briscoe	GB	Hazel Fox	HF

ACTIONS

DECISIONS

QUESTIONS AND CHALLENGES

In Attendance	Initials		
Susanne Kiff	SK	CFOO	Minutes to
Dan Morrow	DM	Associate Member	Attendees
Melissa Trudgill	MT	Governance Manager	Apologies
Pete Last	PL	Trustee (pending)	
Chris Gould	CG	Trustee (pending)	
Stewart Biddles	SB	Trustee (pending)	

Meeting started at 4.10pm

Please note that Trustees agreed for the meeting to be recorded for minute taking and it was deleted on 28.10.20

1 - Apologies
No apologies were received.
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: Full Trustees meeting (Resources focus) held on 24th September (Resource Focus) were agreed as a true record and will be signed by TS in person when Covid 19 restrictions are lifted.
4 –Matters Arising
Red Actions:

4. Pay Policy will come to the next meeting; SK to check on the status of the Grievance and Disciplinary Policies. **(remains red action)**

6. Business Continuity Plan – It was agreed that this was being drafted and was an operational area of responsibility. This action had arisen following Trustees asking for assurance that Business Continuity work was continuing and lessons learnt after Covid lockdown would be included in the plan. **(change to green)**

8. JD/SK fundraising – work in progress. Fundraising website is being developed and hoping to launch this with the Three Hares. Fundraising is focused on creative opportunities for all children across the Trust. JL and PS suggested approaching parish councils and county councillors as they have grants available for local projects. Their budgets renew on 1st April. DM suggested that one focus for fundraising could be forests schools and outdoor education provision. JD will invite DM to the next fundraising meeting. **(change to green).**

9. SJ reported (via PS in the meeting) that she had tried crowdfunding- £2.40 raised. Chamber of Commerce approached no response except Blowzone who believed it was the school's responsibility to support and fund. Babcock in Plymouth and Mount Kelly were not interested. **(change to green).**

10. TS has written to Mel Stride and awaits a response. **(change to green).**

11. Jane Lake is progressing with placing SCR from all schools onto SharePoint and hopes for this to be completed by half term. **(remains red)**

13. HF has not sent out formal guidance for volunteers to schools as risk assessment currently say not to have additional adults into schools due to Covid. From January, HF would like to revisit having volunteers into schools and she will speak to Joe Wood about giving schools the confidence to do this. **(change to green).**

5 – School Improvement Focus

5.1 Interim CEO Report and 5.2 School Improvement Focus including 4 accompanying papers

HF presented her report which included a chronological update on the overarching objectives and success criteria. The following comments and questions were raised:

- **JL asked for clarity on pedagogy under strategic objectives** – HF reported that pedagogy progress was up until lockdown, but after that the priority was the delivery of learning and pedagogy was not the focus, although it has been more so now.
- **JL asked re the implementation overview chart 2a.– has there been any progress since July 2a?** HF said the progress was ongoing and it was important to include an update on what the impact is from participating in the wider partnerships and networks. HF has become a member of the Strategic Planning Group of the North Devon Teaching School Hub which means when the Trust becomes a delivery partner for that group, she will have had a contribution in shaping it.
- **Q MW asked for clarity on the red areas of the heat map** – HF responded that this was where the Headteachers had graded themselves as part of a self-evaluation process. HF felt that the quality assurance and the accountability was not systematic enough across all the schools, but this has been developed and there is a shared assessment timetable going throughout the year.
- DM made the point that previously, the duality of structures and cultural, had not been supportive of lateral work. Since the New Year, HF's leadership at Headteachers' meetings has been team based and there has been a change in culture to embrace a whole Trust approach. TS added that HF has also been proactive in offering Headteachers' supervision.
- Attendance: TS expressed concern about North Tawton especially SEN and disadvantaged pupils. HF has raised this with Elizabeth Underwood and understands that this is due to isolated pockets of nervousness around Covid and some large families being absent which makes a difference to figures in a small school. **Q TS asked about the remote learning provision for those children not in school?** Neil Swait has been talking this through with the Heads of Schools. MW, as Link Trustee of the Three Hares AC, informed that they had 5 families who had moved

away from North Tawton, but these children were still on roll so this was showing as absent, but would be rectified retrospectively.

- NOTED IN CHAT – DM added that attendance to be received at Board level and specific to Covid issues, but challenge and support for this should be at an AC level.
- **JS noted there was variation between schools regarding SEN pupils but the latest attendance figures were not completed for some of the schools. It appears there has been a slight drop off in most schools' settings for SEN and JS asked for clarity on why this was? Have we done any work to ensure that we have no child who has not returned to school at all and if so, are we confident about the plan in place to support transition back into school?** HF met with the SENCOs 3 weeks into this term and reiterated the strong communication required between school and families, plus risk assessments have been continued. There were 2 schools which had quite high numbers of elected home educated pupils and where children had not returned. HF has been reassured by schools that the correct procedures were followed and has also triangulated that with data from County. OPS have the highest numbers amongst primary schools of home educated which is 10 pupils (4 from one family) with rigorous paperwork to support.
- **JS clarified that she was concerned about those who remain on school roll but who have not yet attended school and asked whether schools are sighted of these children and are they being followed up?**

ACTION: HF to investigate and report back at the next meeting on children who are on school roll but have not returned since lockdown.

- DM said we need to look at our processes for SEN, attendance and inclusion because it is not just an issue of process; we do not have enough resource or expertise in this area. HF and DM have this on the radar for the future. HF added that there will be work done to create a strategic SEND plan for the Trust and JS has offered her support with this. It should be valued across all staff in the Trust and children and parents should also have ownership of the plan.
- **SB raised that even where attendance is good, disadvantaged attendance is below whole school so what strategies are in place to address this?** HF met early on with the key EWO and created a network group with all attendance officers meeting together to share good practice and discuss issues. They are aware that narrowing the gap for disadvantaged children needs to be prioritised but this does need more work. HF has written TORs for these groups and now there needs to be a plan and a purpose with milestones, working towards a single direction as to what they will achieve together. DM confirmed that there is strength on the attendance officer side, but this is not matched by family/community liaison work. HF added that there was a lot of good work around Early Help and this has been a strong signposting service.
- **QJL asked if there could be definition on which absences were due to Covid?** HF said there as an X code in use for Covid absences and she would try and breakdown the figures further to reflect this.
- **Q Re p12. HF had referred to a paper and a tribunal, GB asked for confirmation if there had been any complaints this term?** HF said they were not at Board level.
- HF raised some additional points: DMAT are still in the running for the potential new special school in Okehampton. It is going through the planning process and the deadline for bids to the RSC will be by June 2021 with the school opening in September 2022.
- DCC has invited expressions of interest in having a specific resource base for children with particular special needs within our schools. 3 schools are planning to put in expressions of interests – Highampton, OPS and Exbourne.
- **Q TS asked how will we act upon the findings from the recent staff wellbeing questionnaires and how would we feedback to staff?** SK and HF had discussed feeding some results back within the Trust Update. There had been some changes recently to the Trust Update (Bulletin) to make it more engaging.

5.3 Cohesion Strategy Overview

DM introduced his paper which followed numerous conversations he has had with governors, trustees, staff and Headteachers across the Trust and he stated that the paper remains emergent.

DM welcomed feedback and comments, especially focusing on the governance structure, but he also wants an opportunity, as the incoming CEO, to present a strategy which the executive is shaping in their professional capacity to support the challenges from the Trustees.

Questions/Challenges raised:

PS

1. **No concerns or issues with the paper.**

- 2. Key issue at the moment is that we must focus on communication and improving this.** DM agreed with this and said that simplifying some of the processes and structures is key and understanding purpose at each level should improve things. We have agreed to go out to PLMR to be our external communication partner.

JD

- 1. Happy that finance and resources is being brought back out as a separate committee which will give it the time and focus it requires.**
- 2. Re the clusters – JD preferred secondary and primary in clusters together and liked the simplicity of having less clusters. She asked why DM had moved on from this earlier model?** DM explained that he had looked at a 3-hub model with each secondary having a cluster of primaries around it, but had moved away from this for governance. The Headteachers had suggested that this would create an imbalance between secondary and primaries but the heads had liked the idea that this might be the way we organise the education side. DM suggested that there needs to be overlap between governance and executive functions but they do not need to mirror each other e.g. DM feels the QEBs need to be where education experts sit so they can really look at the implementation and impact side of delivering our curriculum. CCBs are a very important way of furthering our cooperative values which would have been more difficult in the hubs. DM and HF have not aligned the education side until the governance structure is considered and reviewed.

GB

- 1. Raised if the QEB was a Trust Board Committee? This was confirmed.**
- 2. P7 Why on the diagram are the QEBs seen as a separate to the other trust committees?** DM said the QEB is specifically looking at the quality of education and although it is a committee of the board, it is not a board committee and should be seen as a middle tier of governance. The QEBs would appoint certain expertise and specialisms and would have a considered level of delegation to do its job. GB reiterated that they would have a link to the Ethos Committee and have representation from the CCB. MT agreed that this would be positive and aid communication if there was CCB representation at a QEB meeting and communication would not just be reliant on minutes and emails.
- 3. HR – where is the committee for this?** DM said this function will be split between the compliance and legal aspects which will come under CFOO and the people and entitlement function will be moving to the teaching school. For governance, it will come under compliance and procurement and people and services.

JS

1. Happy so far with the ideas and was excited about the QEBs which will include a SEN focus.

JL

1. Praised the chart with the Schools at the top with Trustees at the bottom supporting them.
2. JL was in favour of the Headteachers reporting to the Executive.
- 3. He asked that under the subtitle Trust Board level – responsibility for quality of education and financial performance of the trust should be included?** – DM agreed it needs to be included here, although some of the work will be delegated to the QEB. QEB will consider budget aspects of the effectiveness around notional SEN budgets LAC, PP, high needs funding etc.
- 4. CCBs – do we think governors will be interested in these groups as some of the responsibilities will be removed?** DM said this was a good question and he did not know. MT felt that it might be a good opportunity for Trustees/Governors to look at their skills and interests and see where they might want to be within this diagram. TS said that different levels will interest different people. DM felt once the purpose of each committee/layer is confirmed and there is a compelling argument for where people will be sitting and why, it will engender a greater sense of involvement. Following discussions with the AC Chairs regarding the struggles they experienced with recruiting, DM considered this could be because the role is too broad and time consuming. DM said it was not about less responsibility, but about a different focus.
5. JL said care needs to be given re moving all staff onto trust contracts, but understood that an equalisation of terms and conditions needs to be undertaken. SK agreed it would be a soft approach.

PL

1. Thanked DM for the paper and thought it was an intelligently thought-through strategy and noted it was based on the NGA model.
2. He said that the issue of communication had come up several times since he had started with the Trust. He believed that once the TORs were in place, in particular for the CCBs, then he hoped that there would be more clarity regarding the focus and purpose around the CCBs, which might eliminate the perceived communication

issues. DM said that he and MT will work on a handbook so that expectations for all levels will be confirmed in an open and transparent way.

SB

1. Believes that the proposed strategy is excellent. SB thinks that the new strategy will assist in ensuring that local governance needs to operate for the interest of all schools equally. He responded to the previous suggestion about whether governors will still be interested within the new model; he thought we might lose some governors who have different interests or some might prefer to move to different areas within the new governance model.
2. Trust contracts are essential if we are to move forward as one Trust and one employer.

CG

1. CG really liked the diagram. **He asked for clarification on QEBs – would trustees sit on these groups?** DM said they could attend but this might be in a link trustee role. He added that this would be where we would appoint in and ensure that we have educational specialists in a range of areas (curriculum, standards, inclusions, attendance, social care). Trustees would receive reports from these boards. DM said we cannot have Trustees sitting at more than one level following NGA recommendation about having clear separation between governance layers. DM would look for a link trustee to be on the QEBs, but not as a voting member. CG stated that he thought the link trustee was vital whilst not confusing the roles in the different governance levels.

MW

1. MW was in favour of much of what had been discussed, but felt that the Finance and Resources committee should be entitled the Finance, Resources and Premises Committee.
2. **Communication** is a serious issue – not just what is communicated, but how and when it is communicated. As a MAT we need to listen as well as transmit. **He questioned why there was no direct communication between the MAT Central Team/CEO and the CCBs; the CCBs only seem to have communication to the Ethos Committee and the QEB which may lead to delay, if there was an urgent matter which was not an ethos or QEB how does the CCB transmit this back to the MAT.** MW suggested using **the link trustee** as a direct conduit between the CCB and the Trust Board and link trustees between the Trust Board and the QEBs.
3. **Triangular model** - MW suggested the Cohesion Strategy model being recast as a triangular diagram with Trust Board on one corner, QEB on 2nd corner, CCB on the 3rd corner with the MAT central team and schools in the centre. There would be 3 layers of governance and responsibilities – strategic, operational and tactical. Not hierarchical but 3 elements working together. This would reduce the number of channels of communication, which would make it easier to transmit and communication. MT asked MW whether having link trustees on 7 CCBs and 2 QEBs would possibly make things more complex and confuse communication but MW explained that if there was a reporting channel which all the link trustees use to communicate back to the Board in a simple, uniform format. MT raised concern about trustees' time to be able to be link trustees, sit on additional trust board committees and attend the trustee meetings.
 - **Involving ACs in contributing to the model** – MW reminded that when defining the purpose of the CCBs, some of these Boards were there in existence before the Trust was and it was important to engage governors and ask them what they would like to do and how they want to be involved. MW felt the QEBs gave an opportunity for the Heads, CCB Chairs and the Central Team to come together, but care must be taken that this involvement is a place where all parties come together and pro-create.
 - TS thanked MW for his comments and the paper he had submitted prior to the meeting. TS said today was about refining the strategy and then it would go to wider groups on 5.11.20 at the Trust Update Meeting.
 - DM thanked MW for his thought-provoking paper. The co-construction and co-operation were a valid point and DM felt that he has had many conversations with the leaders in the school and has listened and heard that the current structure creates barriers despite the positive input and time given by governors. DM wants to be open and honest with the conversations and about why we are making these decisions. DM will want to attend the CCB meetings as he will be interested on what is going on. DM said on some aspects it is hard to communicate what it will be like in practise, but it will be important for it to be tested out, go with the model and then redress parts that may not work.
 - MW felt that the CCBs need defined spheres of activity and have to be empowered to carry out those activities.
 - SB said in the initial stages, if you want to move things forward, sometimes there is a time for saying - this is what is going to happen and communicating this with AC Chairs and their Boards. As they understand their roles as part of a Trust, conversations can be held about developing the structures further, once the new model is in place.
 - TS believed that it is a balance between the speed of moving things forward whilst seeking the opinions and advice of colleagues on 5th November. The strategy will be refined and our colleagues will amend the document

including the considerations raised today and give another document out for sharing at the meeting on 5th November.

- **Q GB raised concern over the role of the link trustees and queried which aspects are they required to be reporting back on? The AC Chair has links back to MT and TS and Headteachers have their link back to the CEO. So what additional aspects are the link trustees meant to be reporting on?**
- PS said there was a change process before, which had been poorly managed. Consultation, when it takes place, needs to be real consultation before decisions are made. This does not mean that permission is sought from everyone, before change occurs.

DM agreed that he would reissue the document taking into consideration those issues discussed in the meeting. He summarised the discussion; on the Board there is a spectrum of thought around the degree in which we are taking a paternalistic approach to this i.e. getting it introduced quickly and sharply but potentially at the expense and cost of participation and discussion versus a co-constructed view which is longer piece of change management. DM's view is that he is sympathetic to participative argument, but this should have been done when setting up the Trust; now we are at the sharp end of reputation and standards and so therefore, there is an urgency. DM will share it openly at every level and TS believes that once everyone sees the TORs and purpose of each level, they will become engaged with the new ideas. TS sees the new model not as devaluing anyone, but a chance to refocus and using specialisms within the Trust.

6 – Matters Brought forward at the Direction of the Chair

6.1 Email from Dartmoor Federation (Secondary) AC

TS as Chair thanked M Livingstone for her email which has been shared with all Trustees. She will respond to the email on behalf of the Board. TS clarified that the Trust Champions was shared first with Headteachers and assumptions had been made that information would be shared. MW made a comment that this was a wider problem including at Trust Board level. He reminded that the gold standard was accompanying papers to be sent out 7 days before as Trustees need time to read the documents and reflect on them. All agreed that we should work towards this across the Trust. DM felt there was a lack of clarity about timing and papers and this needs to be programmed and understood; he will be clarifying this.

7 Trustee Board

7.1 Update on Risk Register

SK confirmed that this would be driven from Every and it will have the 18 business critical risks which GB had suggested. Every is being updated and as soon as it is ready, SK will run a report and share this with Trustees.

ACTION: SK to share the risk register report at the next audit committee on 3.12.20 and any comments or reports with an executive summary will be forwarded to the Full Board on 10.12.20.

7.2 Report back from Task and Finish Groups

Interim Leadership Task and Finish Group – notes circulated. The Trustee Board had approved the T and F Group to support the senior leadership team during the handover period up to the end of December. Following Dan's support and impact on the leadership team, there is a recommendation to the Board for the Task & Finish to be discontinued. Instead a Core Strategic Group has been created with HF, SK, MT and DM. The Task and Finish Group will only be reconvened on an ad hoc basis.

Tavistock Task and Finish Group – verbal report from JD. The working party has submitted numerous papers to the Task and Finish group and a meeting had been held. There has been a recommendation to appoint a project manager as there are not the skills available in house. SK has a meeting planned with the principle designer next week and she will report back after this meeting.

OPS/St James Task and Finish Group

JL said the next meeting of this group had been placed on hold until the new plans for governance are shared with ACs on 5th November.

7.3 Business Continuity Plan – draft

Trustees thanked Joe Wood for his paper (F6) reflecting on: what was learnt from Covid, what we need to think about and what we might do differently. PS noted that the key message in the paper was the unavailability of key staff during a holiday period and this is an important message for any major issues that arises i.e. there has to be some way to contact someone who has the authority and ability to speak and make decisions. Joe Wood is working on a communication tree so that in the event of an incident, there is clear communication from CEO down to the schools and this will be shared. DM confirmed that on the strategic calendar there will be named responsible persons on every day throughout the year regardless of weekend or holiday.

8. Policies/Documents – Review and Approve

Policy Updates Tracker

October Policies to include:

Acceptable Use Policy Pupils

DECISION: Trustees reviewed and approved this policy.

Acceptable Use Policy Staff

DECISION: Trustees reviewed and approved this policy

CCTV Policy

DECISION: Trustees reviewed and approved this policy

Code of Conduct Trustees and Governors

DECISION: Trustees reviewed and approved this policy

Trustees noted this included new guidance from the NGA and the Diocese.

Executive Pay Policy

DECISION: Trustees reviewed and approved this policy subject to one amendment: the range for the CEO at the bottom of the page is inaccurate.

New Executive Policy will be coming in on 1st January 2021.

Q MW asked if we were still adhering to the policy that the top salary is no more than 12 times the lowest salary?

TS confirmed that this was adhered to although currently the top figure in the range is £3,000 over but when the new policy comes in, this will be exactly in line.

Homeworking Policy

DECISION: Trustees reviewed and approved this policy

Privacy Notice for Pupils

DECISION: Trustees reviewed and approved this policy

Privacy Notice for Staff

DECISION: Trustees reviewed and approved this policy

Privacy Notice -SEND

DECISION: Trustees reviewed and approved this policy

Recruitment Policy

DECISION: Trustees reviewed and approved this policy

Whistleblowing Policy

DECISION: Trustees reviewed and approved this policy

9 Academy Committee – Minutes

To include:

AC Questions

Dartmoor Fed (Mins 9.7.20, Mins (Sec) 10.9.20And New Governor Application with skills audit)

- DECISION: Jane Colbourne was approved by Trustees as governor for the Dartmoor Federation AC.**

Trustees thanked the AC and Clerk for the application form, individual skills matrix and AC Board matrix.

MW declared an interest in this item as he was referee for J Colbourne.

- Trustees thanked the AC for the minutes which were read with interest.

Three Hares (Mins 22.9.20 and new governor application with skills audit)

- DECISION: Mark Neave was approved by Trustees as governor for the Three Hares AC.**

Trustees thanked the AC and Clerk for the application form, individual skills matrix and AC Board matrix.

- Trustees thanked the AC for the minutes which were read with interest. Questions had been raised for the Trustees and a response had been drafted and would be circulated to the AC Board.

OPS (Mins 14.9.20)

- Trustees thanked the AC for the minutes which were read with interest.

10 – Date of Next Meeting

Ethos Leads meeting – Tuesday 3rd November 4pm

Trust Update for All – Thursday 5th November 4pm

Full Trustees Meeting (Resource Focus) Thursday 26th November 4pm

The meeting ended at 6.25pm

ACTION TABLE – from meeting 22.10.20

No.	WHO	WHAT	WHEN
1	Gill Tremain	To design and implement the Staff Absence Report for Summer Term	Autumn Term
2	MT	To produce a yearly summary of meeting reviews by Trustees to understand common issues raised.	As part of Board Evaluation – Autumn Term
3	SK/JL/JD	SK to review last year's benchmarking information on the new ESFA portal and share with Trustees at Audit Committee as a training exercise.	December
4	SK/Gill Tremain	SK/Gill Tremain to revisit the HR policies to reflect our organisation and distribute to Trustees for final approval either by email or via a Trustee Meeting. (Executive Pay Policy, Pay policy, Grievance, Disciplinary)	Ongoing
5	MT/TS	To provide and work on a model TOR for the full AC boards.	Autumn Term
6	SK	To provide a report on updating the Business Continuity Plan in light of recent COVID 19.	N/A (operational)
7	SK	To bring Gag Pooling report to EM Full Trustees 15.10.20 4-6pm	Completed
8	SK/JD	To work on fundraising opportunities, website, fundraising for creative opportunities for children and create a fundraising working group.	Completed
9	Sarah J	To approach local companies for sponsorship of the new ICT Build.	Completed

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10	TS/Sarah Jones	To contact Mel Stride and local MPs for assistance in funding re Tavistock Buildings Project.	Completed
11	Jane Lake/SK	To ensure that all SCR uploaded onto SharePoint by the start of term (password protected).	ASAP
12	SK	To share results of survey to staff re well-being and feelings about September returning to school and feedback results to Trustees.	Completed
13	HF	To check whether formal guidance for volunteers has gone out.	N/A
14	TS/DM	To consider setting up a HR committee, which reports to the Full Trustee Board, in the future.	January 2021
15	MT	To send out doddle poll for Strategic Away Day where the Executive Team will share their plans with Trustees.	Completed
16	MT	To inform IC of DC's resignation	Completed
17	TS	To inform members of the resignation of DC	Completed
18	HF/MT	HF will forward to MT the contact details of the DFLS so MT is able to email them formal confirmation of DMAT approval. (HF/MT)	ASAP
19	MT	To bring to next Full Trustee meeting a draft updated code of conduct.	Completed
20	HF	To include in her next CEO report on attendance, bullet points of overviews.	Completed
21	JD/SK	To look into the total cost involved in purchasing the Chromebooks as a matter of urgency.	Completed
22	TS	To contact SS Chair of Tavistock AC to clarify the situation.	Completed
23	HF	To investigate and report back at the next meeting on those children who are on school roll but have not returned since lockdown.	26.11.20
24	SK	To share the risk register report at the next audit committee meeting	3.12.20