



# ACES ACADEMIES TRUST

Minutes of the MAT Meeting held on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2020 at 5.15 pm  
Community Meeting Room, Hinchingsbrooke School

**Present:** Mr Brian Message (BM), Chair  
Mr Andrew Goulding (AEG), CEO  
Mr Dave McMillan (DRM), Finance Director

**Directors:** Mr Paul Fenney (PF), Mr Cliff Fluet (CF), Mr Gary Weston (GW),  
Mr Andy Rankine (AR), Mr Ian Phillips (IP)

**Members:** Mr Bev Curtis (BJC), Mr Charles Glanville (CG)

**In attendance:** Mr Mark Patterson (MJP) – Principal of Hinchingsbrooke School  
Mrs Debbie Warner (DW), Clerk

-	<b>Introduction from Mark Patterson</b>
	The new Principal of Hinchingsbrooke School, Mark Patterson gave an introduction to the Board. He was pleased to report that things have started very well with staff and student morale being very positive. His main focus will be preparing the school for Ofsted. He made reference to the strong senior team and some outstanding middle leaders.
1.	<b>Apologies for absence</b>
	There were no apologies for absence.
2.	<b>Declarations of interest</b>
	There were no changes to declaration of interest.
3.	<b>Minutes of meeting of 09/12/19</b>
	Minutes of meeting were considered to be an accurate record of proceedings. There was one correction to point 5.3 to clarify that IMO will attend Foundation meetings on an ad hoc basis and not be in regular attendance at the meetings.
4.	<b>Matters arising</b>
	Covered elsewhere on the agenda.
5.	<b>CEO Report (AEG)</b>
	<p>5.1 <u>Hinchingsbrooke School operations</u> The CEO reported that from 1 January 2020, Mark Patterson has become Principal of Hinchingsbrooke School. He is still attending weekly Vice Principal and timetabling meetings for continuity. He added that Mark has made an excellent start and feedback has been exceptionally positive. The CEO said he was delighted to have won the bid for OLT and has met the Headteachers of both schools to start building those relationships. Formal process/due diligence will now take place. The CEO referred to the uncertainty regarding the proposed merger with NET but was hopeful he would know more after NET had had their Board meeting.</p> <p>5.2 <u>Cromwell Academy operations</u> The Headteacher, Hannah Connor-James, had provided a full report. An item of note was that the long serving caretaker is leaving which has enabled some alterations to the ACES site team. <b>A Trustee note that the data in the report for Cromwell Academy was looking positive.</b></p>
6.	<b>MAT Development (BM/AEG)</b>
	<p>6.1 <u>ACES/NET</u> The Chair explained that a memorandum of understanding had been signed and a joint Steering Committee has been formed in respect of ACES/NET proposed merger. At the last Steering Committee, the CEO position was discussed. In the event that a merger does not take place, a partnership between the 2 Trusts was suggested by NET but, after discussion, would not be the preferred option.</p> <p>6.2 <u>ACES/OLT</u> The CEO reported earlier that the bid for OLT had been won by ACES and updated Trustees on the proposed structure: There would be no immediate requirement for a company secretary and his intention is to develop the education team. REB to be a Director of SEND and appoint a primary Education lead Teacher.</p>

Signed  
Date

	<p>Already in place, is a Teacher for Science and Maths. In the longer term, it is hoped that a Director of Education can be appointed to concentrate on areas of standards and innovation and able to scrutinise data, supporting Headteachers.</p> <p>DRM is over at NET 50% of the time but when this is finished the scope of his role will need to be determined. Hopefully to bring IMO as strategic Manager of all sites. IT support could be placed centrally.</p> <p><b>A Trustee thought commercial opportunities should be explored.</b></p> <p>The Chair informed Trustees that the CEO's contract with Hinchingsbrooke School should remain until the outcome of the proposed NET merger is known.</p> <p>Trustees requested forecast figures from OLT.</p>
<b>7.</b>	<b>To approve Scheme of Delegation</b>
	<p>The CEO had made minor amendments to the document:</p> <p>The LGB to operate without sub-committees.</p> <p>A Trustee noted that the reference to Hearings Committee should be changed to Disciplinary Committee.</p> <p>A Trustee noted that HR is very legalistically focused and does not refer to the welfare of staff) (page 13 &amp; 14).</p> <p>The CEO commented that the Trust has not been operating in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation and although the MAT is still in its early stages, there will be a need to adhere to the Scheme of Delegation.</p> <p>The CEO agreed to make the necessary amendments to the Scheme of Delegation and recirculate to Trustees for their approval.</p>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Finance update (PF)</b>
	<p><u>8.1 In-year position</u></p> <p>PF advised Trustees that the finance report from end of December was issued late because difficulties reconciling the payroll. Recruitment processes are now improved from a financial point of view with clearer budgetary implications. Key points: the Trust is £73,000 better than budget due to higher ESFA funding for Cromwell Academy. Better HSSP performance has also helped with an additional school coming on board. However, PR said it was worth noting that HSSP performance is under pressure and the current model will not work long term. PR informed Trustees that some gains have been offset by higher Hinchingsbrooke School staff costs. Outlook for the year shows that the Trust is anticipating £35,000 better than budget.</p> <p>PF referred to the £100,000 MDIF which has not been received. DRM to chase this.</p> <p><b>Q: A Trustee asked if the MDIF funding it was likely to be received</b></p> <p><b>A: DRM confirmed that it had been approved and hopeful to receive this funding.</b></p> <p>PF emphasised that lack of tight control on staffing costs was not considered to be positive management action. PF referred to a recent inspection from the SRMA who advise schools on how to manage their resources. The key points from the inspection discussed: no risk register and or reserves policy (AR has agreed to progress this). A skills audit of the Board should be carried out to ensure there is a good balance of expertise. Non-contact time for Hinchingsbrooke School is generous, TLRs are rich, leadership costs are high and CEO position is unaffordable in the event the MAT does not expand. PF said there is a need to have a more considered look at these areas of note. DRM is going on course with ASCL to do ICFP to build a model for next year which will inform a response to the key points raised. This should be brought back to the next meeting.</p> <p>PF advised Trustees that it would be useful to perform a Skills audit.</p>
<b>9.</b>	<b>AOB</b>
	<p>The Chair said there is a skeletal approach to the sub committees pending anticipation of a wider MAT. The CEO said that an application for Academy Ambassadors is ready to go pending the outcome of the proposed NET merger.</p> <p>A Trustee asked that the Board are informed regarding NETs next steps.</p>
<b>9.</b>	<b>Date of next meetings</b>
	<p>Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> April, 5.15 pm (Board)</p> <p>Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> July, 5.15pm (Board)</p>

Meeting finished at 7.30 pm