

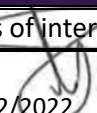


Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting held on Tuesday 7 December 2021, 5.15 pm, via Zoom

Present: Brian Message (BM), Chair and Trustee
 Gary Weston (GW), Trustee
 Dan Lewis (DL), Trustee
 Rebecca Ryan (RR), Trustee
 Jeffrey Matemba (JM), Trustee
 James Nicholson (JN), Trustee
 Chris Meddle (CM), Trustee

In attendance: Andrew Goulding (AEG), CEO
 David McMillan (DRM), Finance Director
 Debbie Warner, Clerk

-	Headteacher update
	<p>Headteachers from schools in the Trust were invited to the meeting to provide an update.</p> <p>Hannah Connor-James, Cromwell Academy: Covid continues to be biggest challenge but not as badly affected as other schools in the Trust. Impacted by high number of cases in one particular year group and trying to contain spread in other year groups. Covid has had a negative impact on attendance figures. The school is feeling positive about Ofsted outcome.</p> <p><u>Questioning/challenge:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How is the school managing Y6 gaps in knowledge due to Covid? - Cross curricular links will help develop breadth with comprehensive bounce back programme which gives students extra hours of learning above normal timetable. Targeted interventions throughout school day. <p>Update from Mark Patterson, Principal, Hinchingsbrooke School: Recent Ofsted inspection has taken place. Preliminary report has been received by the school for comments. Covid continues to impact with 27 members of staff off with Covid related absence and other illness. Recent immunisation programme for 12 to 15 year has seen an improvement in Covid related absences in students with Year 7 making up most of student absence.</p> <p><u>Questioning/challenge:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is there a point where you will need to close due to staff absence? - Not there yet but is dependent on which member of staff is off? <p>Update from Richard Bakker/Tess Fielden, Co Headteacher, Godmanchester Community: Also experiencing high levels of absence due to Covid with 80 absences in the school (staff and students). Main issue is staffing pressure and staff wellbeing is also a concern. New phonics programme has seen a good impact and new play equipment has been installed.</p> <p>Claire Pirrie, Headteacher, Godmanchester Bridge Academy: Covid related absence has improved since the earlier Autumn term. Some challenges with students with SEND needs – it has been hard to get the right intervention and recruitment of staff to support in this area. National Tutoring is working well and anticipate a good impact from this. Drainage rectification on the school playing field is underway. Running a full curriculum presently.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Heads for their reports and excellent leadership during a continued difficult time. Headteachers left the meeting at this point.</p>
1.	Apologies
	There were no apologies.
2.	Declaration of interests
	No conflicts of interest were declared.

Signed: 
 Date: 08/02/2022

3.	Elections/Resignations
	The Chair acknowledged a reduction in the number of Trustees and informed the meeting that there were no immediate plans to increase the Board of Trustees due to the possible imminent merger with another Trust.
4.	To approve the minutes of the last meeting of 19 October 2021
	The minutes of the meeting of 19 October 2021 were considered to be an accurate account of proceedings and were approved by Trustees.
5.	CEO's Report
	<p>Trustees confirmed that they had received and read the report prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Following the last meeting where the Board requested evidence of a financial recovery plan for Spaldwick Primary School, the Finance Director reported the proposed plan for the acquisition of Spaldwick: removal of some lines of expenditure; increased pupil funding rate is increasing which will improve income; planning assumptions are higher. Additionally, preliminary discussions with CCC has identified a need for SEND provision in existing premises and Spaldwick Primary has viable premises. The school PAN would decreased to 16, which seems reasonable based on pupil predictions. The Finance Director informed the meeting that the SEND unit would increase funding and there will be a need to recruit a SENDCo and Teaching Assistant support. He added that the Trust is currently waiting to hear on the CCC's decision.</p> <p>The Chair proposed to Trustees that the Board proceeds with the acquisition of Spaldwick.</p> <p>Trustees agreed that Spaldwick should join the ACES Trust</p> <p><u>Questioning/challenge:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Should 50% top slice be considered as a contingency for Spaldwick? - The Finance Director agreed that it would be worth considering but if the SEND unit materialises, this would improve the school's financial position, and should therefore stay in line with the other schools in the Trust. - Is the Trust certain that there will not be an issue with cross subsidising. - How the unit is set is yet to be determined. <p>The CEO advised that the Scheme of Delegation has been amended to reflect the removal of the Pay Review Committee from the local governing body, requested by Hinchingsbrooke School.</p> <p>Trustees approved changes to the Scheme of Delegation</p>
6.	Strategic Plan
	<p>The Chair updated the Board on progress of the proposed merger and had met with Chair of the MAT. The CEO confirmed that both parties have agreed that they should move forward and hope to complete this by September. He advised that a steering committee had been set up and will meet in January. RR and RJ have agreed to be part of the steering committee. The Chair thought all was very encouraging.</p> <p>The Finance Director informed Trustees that the Trust was down to a selection of 3 in a recent bid for another secondary school.</p>
7.	Committees update
	<p>The committee chairs provided an update on items covered in their recent committee meetings.</p> <p>Update by James Nicholson, Chair, Finance Committee:</p> <p>Recent meetings have covered discussion on end of academic year, support staff pay award, which is still undecided. Ended at £45,000 deficit which is budgeted for. Capital expenditure included boilers for GCA but were unsuccessful on the bidding for a new sixth form for Hinchingsbrooke School. Work has started on Hinchingsbrooke House and insurers have paid for the liner of the swimming pool at Hinchingsbrooke School. The Site Team are understaffed and have been unsuccessful in recruiting staff in this area.</p> <p>Update by Raj Joshi, Chair, Audit & Risk Committee:</p> <p>Standard guidance on audit and risk has been drawn up by RJ and the Finance Director. Risk paper to be adopted and disseminated. Discussion on training sessions to embed culture within the Trust. Risk policy should be in place to ensure practical aspect like training are adhered to.</p> <p>Update by Rebecca Ryan, Chair, HR Committee:</p> <p>Discussion on performance related pay. Update received from HR Manager which flagged up issues to do with attendance and sickness. IT recruitment is still an issue and an apprenticeship scheme is being considered. Pulse</p>

	<p>wellbeing questionnaire is being sent to staff.</p> <p>Update by Brian Message, Chair, Standards & Innovation Committee: As BM chaired the last meeting, he gave an update of the last meeting with a main focus on IT which requires some investment. Failures in this area need to be solved. Discussion on digital strategy and need the to plan for the new MIS system - Arbor.</p>
8.	<p>AOB</p> <p>The CEO had added a paper to his report on growing into a larger mat which shows items for consideration. He asked Trustees to feedback any thoughts to him.</p> <p>ACTION: TRUSTEES TO FEEDBACK COMMENTS ON CEO'S PAPER ON GROWING INTO A LARGER MAT</p>
9.	<p>Date of next meeting</p>
	<p>08/02/2022</p>

Meeting finished at 6.45pm