



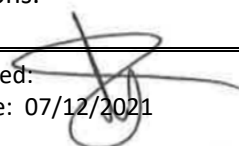
ACES ACADEMIES TRUST

Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting held on
Tuesday 19 October 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
Jefrey Matemba (JM), Trustee
James Nicholson (JN), Trustee
Chris Meddle (CM), Trustee
Andrew Goulding (AEG), CEO

In attendance: David McMillan (DRM), Finance Director
Debbie Warner (DW), Clerk

	Introduction to Mark Coles, Chair of HBK LGC
	Mark Coles, Chair of HBK LGC was invited to the meeting to introduce himself and was welcomed by Trustees as the new Chair. MC felt that there was strong leadership at the school which has been reflected with how the school has dealt with the pandemic. He was aware that staff absence was causing stress for senior leaders. <i>Mark Coles left the meeting at this point</i>
1.	Apologies for absence
	Apologies were received from Ian Phillips and Raj Joshi
2.	Declaration of interests
	No conflicts of interest were declared.
3.	To approve the minutes of the last meeting of 20/07/2021
	The minutes of the last meeting were deemed to be an accurate account of proceedings and were signed off by the Chair.
4.	Confirmation of re-election of Chairs to the Local Governing Committees
	The clerk confirmed that the chair for Cromwell Academy and Godmanchester Bridge Academy had been re-elected by the local governing committees. Additionally, Mark Coles was appointed as Chair of Hinchbrooke at their first LGC meeting in September. The CEO confirmed that the Chair of Cromwell Academy is in his eighth year as Chair and it is his intention to step down at the end of this academic year. The Chair of GCA has stepped down with immediate effect due to personal reasons. He acknowledged that due process has not always been followed as stringently as it should be. There is a new clerk in place who is aware of processes. Theresa Shaw, the current vice chair, has stepped into the role on a temporary basis.
5.	CEO report (CEO)
	The CEO updated Trustees on his report highlighting key points: The term had started well for all schools but staff absenteeism due to Covid and other illnesses continues to be an issue. HBK has had to use rarely cover. The primary schools in the Trust have managed to avoid sending children home. The CEO thought morale is good but the biggest issue for staff is the IT systems. Transition away from Cambs IT and migration of data has not gone smoothly. Additionally, a lack of communication has led to frustrations in the schools and he acknowledged that there must be improvements with communication. Currently upgrades of new servers are taking place. There is currently a vacancy for an IT Technician which is proving difficult to fill. DRM looking at Kickstart options.

Signed: 
Date: 07/12/2021

	<p>Questioning/challenge: A trustee asked if IT leadership should be re-addressed The CEO did not think this is necessary at present: GBA have appointed an IT lead. Furthermore, communication is more the issue and DRM is working with the IT department to try to improve this. A Trustee erred concern over the IT's resilience and back-up systems which need careful planning. He recommended an independent audit.</p> <p>ACTION: EXTERNAL IT AUDIT TO BE ARRANGED</p>
6.	<p>Growth</p>
	<p>Spaldwick Primary School: The CEO advised Trustees that Andrea Squires from Winkworth Sherwood has been appointed to undertake the academisation process and the necessary changes to the legal documentation. Due diligence has been undertaken and the report is contained within the report.</p> <p>The CEO added that the biggest concern is finances. The Finance Director updated Trustees on the school's staffing structure and the proposal to make savings on staff costs and in other areas such as IT. Savings would be made on grounds maintenance as this would come under ACES.</p> <p>The CEO said that it may be necessary to waive the top slice until a financial recovery plan is in place.</p> <p>Questioning/challenge: A Trustee asked if we wanted to take on the financial stewardships of such a school. Another trustee raised concern about the figures at present which show the deficit is getting wider year on year - do we want to accept this level of risk? Another Trustee felt it was a substantial risk if there were not enough pupils and no indication of an uptake in admissions A Trustee said that he could understand the moral side of taking the school on due to it being a feeder school but would need to consider a recovery plan before moving forward on this.</p> <p>ACTION: CM/JN/BM TO CONSIDER RECOVERY PLAN ON SPALDWICK SCHOOL BEFORE NEXT MEETING</p> <p>Partnerships: The CEO advised of 2 potential small MATS which may lead to a partnership. One of the Trusts is prepared to move forward with pace with a merger. The Chair is due to have a discussion with BM.</p> <p>The CEO provided Trustees with paperwork for both MATs for scrutiny and the Chair agreed that conversations should continue with both with the intention to move towards a partnership.</p> <p>ACTION: BM TO MEET WITH CHAIR OF TRUSTEES OF POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIP MAT</p>

Meeting finished at 6.30pm