

Education South West

Board Meeting Minutes – PART I

Monday 23 May 2022 – 18:30

Kingsbridge Community College

Attendees:

Peter Di Giuseppe (PDG), Matthew Shanks (MS), Jeremy Fothergill (JF), Lindsay Yelland (LY), Kellie Knott (KK), Annelie Fearon (AF), Jenny Sutton (JS)

In attendance:

Stuart White (SW), Tracy Hannon (TH), Martin Smith (MSm)
Jackie Eason (JE) will be in attendance as part of the NLG Governance Review of the Trust

Apologies:

Barrie Taylor (BT), Graham Austin (GA), David Potter (DP)

Notes:

Pippa Truman Davies (PTD)

Quorum:

50% of the total number of Non-Executive Directors
(4, not including MS)

ESW413. Apologies

The meeting had been moved from the 18 May to the 23 May and apologies were given from DP, GA and BT due to diary clashes.

ESW414. Declarations of interest & Directors statement

None were declared by the Trustees.

ESW415. Minutes

- i. Minutes of previous Board meeting, 16 March 2022 – Part 1 and 2 attached
All Trustees approved the minutes as a true record of the meeting.

ESW416. Matters arising from the previous meeting

1. MS spoke to Alan Salt about the Part 2 concern and it is in hand.
2. TH is working with AH/PTD regarding the Governor Training program next year. This should be finalised next half term.
3. Discussions are ongoing with AH/LY/KK about the Exclusions policy and this will be tabled at the next meeting.

ACTION: AH/LY/KK to meet with MS/TH ahead of tabling a discussion about Exclusions at the next Board meeting.



ESW417. Trust and education matters from CEO

- i. Written report
- ii. Update on applications to join ESW
- iii. Succession planning and strategic plan to include papers on
 - a. School Improvement Development
 - b. Shared Services Development

Update on applications to join ESW

Here followed a Part 2 discussion.

ACTION: PTD to send out Management Partnership Agreement to LY/GA

JF commented that the Government White Papers' summaries are silent about where we get our Governors and Trustees from. The DfE are asking a lot more of these volunteers in the proposed new MAT structure and they will be difficult to recruit. MS thought that although Trusts will get bigger we will keep the same number of Trustees and Governors. PDG commented, however that as the number of Trusts increase there will be a greater requirement for Trustees across the sector.

Here followed a Part 2 discussion.

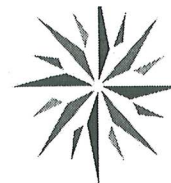
Attendance

LY asked about the UTC pupil numbers for next year. SW confirmed that there will be about 50 pupils in year 10 and 40 in year 12 and this is very close to what was projected in the budget.

KK noted that broadly in Secondary schools there seems to be an issue around double disadvantaged and asked what are the strategies to tackle this? MS explained that the double disadvantaged have had more difficulties in going back to school post COVID. Door to door knocking is still taking place with these families. SEN and some of the disadvantaged have a higher proportion (anecdotally) of anxiety. All the schools now have or are moving towards having individual pastoral workers for each year group who are focused on ensuring that those pupils who have particular vulnerabilities are in school and are supported when in school. TH added that the pastoral support has increased hugely within the schools. Early help and MASH referrals have gone sky high and there are huge delays because of COVID in the response. For example, it can take 12 months before a child can see an Educational Psychologist so we are having to find more pastoral support internally. The salaries for Educational Psychologists have increased by 40% so we will continue to go to DCC for this support. If the pupils are not in school it is still our responsibility for the safeguarding of those pupils so that means home visits and therefore more demand on our SENCo. We have implemented deputy SENDCo's across the Trust which has proved a valuable strategy for succession planning and to cover the work load. In addition, there is now a Safeguarding lead appointed across the Trust.

KK asked when it might improve? MS believes it will actually get worse as more people will become disadvantaged. You will see attendance drop this term as they start to get seasonal work to support the family and school is not the priority. We are doing everything we can and we have had two focused sessions on social mobility with the HT's and we have 2 appointments for disadvantage leads across the Trust. PDG commented that the impact on the budget must be huge and asked where is it coming from and is anything being cut? MS said the HT's are looking for individual savings where they can and the School Improvement costs have increased centrally due to the recruitment of cross-Trust leads.

AF wanted to know if there is any feedback from the staff? MS said there is lots of feedback and it is mainly about lack of time.



LY asked if having an inhouse Educational Psychologist would reduce the delay in referrals? MS explained that Babcock (who run the process for DCC) will not take an Educational Psychologist referral for an EHCP unless they are employed by them. Some Educational Psychologists do the work remotely now and the reports they produce are not good. When Babcock are no longer involved with DCC then we will have to source our own specialists. The green paper for SEND will give that responsibility back into Trusts and we as Trust leaders have asked the DfE for the responsibility for Educational Psychologists, Social Works and Speech and Language Therapists (and the funding to go with it). Babcock will not be involved with Devon in a few months' time. TH added that schools are looking to improve their capability with diagnostic packages for assessments so they are better equipped to identify what that child needs next.

KK noted that the attendance figures for Coombeshead stood out and asked if we should we ask the governing body to do something specific about that? TH explained that they have some children with the medical issues that have influenced the data. PDG requested that can we have this information next time in the report. LY added that it would also useful to have numbers in the report.

ACTION: TH/MS to include context and numbers in the attendance figures for the next report.

MS referred to the CST trust review document that he has updated with his comments for Trustees to challenge at the next meeting. We need to continually look at ourselves as a Board and this will provide us with a starting point for a discussion.

ACTION: CST review document to be discussed at the next Board meeting.

MS explained that the White Paper throws up 3 things:-

- 1) If this Government stays in place then not a lot is going to change,
- 2) Trusts will be the way forward but not until 2030,
- 3) We have to decide what we want to do as a Trust.

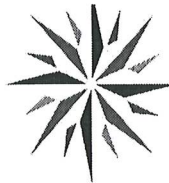
MS believes that writing a growth strategy to reach a certain number of pupils by 2030 would not be right for ESW. Do we want to merge with another Trust and/or continue building relationships with schools who want to join our Trust? JF and KK agreed that we should not grow for grow sake but keep open the option to merge or grow.

Church Articles

MS noted that our Church Articles were agreed by the Diocese and they then went to DfE and the Church of England for approval. They responded saying that we cannot adopt them until we have a Church school, but the Diocese want us to have Church Articles first before giving us Church schools. MS has sent them back to find a solution.

Succession Planning

JF commented on both the School Improvement (SI) and Shared Services (SS) organisation structures. He said that both will provoke comments from LGB's and parents as the centre is increasing in size and cost. We could show that the cost of running the centre is still good value and cheaper by looking at the cost compared to the number of children over time. MS explained that these changes have been made in consultation with HT's and if we don't do this then we will not be working like a Trust, being able to add something additional to a standalone school. Also, there is not an increase in cost for SS but there is for SI which is where schools have asked for this increase in capacity. The rest of the staff come from inside the schools so there is no overall cost increase.



SW commented that from a SS point of view, 11 schools, year on year is almost the same number and you would expect to see an increase. KEVICC joining has had a diluting effect which is enabling some investment in the structure which will support the next step. As you grow a MAT you will get an economy of scale which reduces the per capita costs or prevents it increasing.

JF believes we that we do need some good ammunition to go back to the LGB's as we have so many Directors now in ESW. TH said we have had a discussion at Chairs' Forum about having a Trust report on the schools at the beginning of the year to show where the value is being focused. MS commented that we just have to look at the KEVICC application to join ESW: they are seeing the value of what we have to offer compared to what they have now. Additionally, we have lost 3 CDLs to other Trusts who are paying more and they do 5 days a week. We run a cost-effective process whereby staff working on school improvement also work within schools.

LY noted that the only way for Board to keep track of this is to have a per pupil cost as a benchmark. At Board level we are not seeing this until after the event and we never have been given a cost for it. MS commented that he, SW and TH are paid a reasonable amount to run the organisation and we need to increase the capacity so we don't drop the ball.

LY stated that as a Board we should know the figure, not saying that you cannot do it. LGB's are going to ask what the cost is. PDG recalled that in the budget for the current year set last year there was a figure for SI of £100,000. TH confirmed that is what was costed in for the new DoSi this time last year. MS reiterated that this increase in SI capacity is at the request of the HT's. MS noted that these plans have brought to the Board and that information is shared weekly with PDG and also with KK.

PDG agreed it is wise to be armed with the information at the LGB's. The Chairs of the LGB's are feeding back that with their HT's they understand what we are doing so it is of no great concern. JF would like to be able say that the increase in SS represents a reduction in cost per pupil as the cost is growing and we are sharing that central cost. MS noted that we cannot grow without being in a position to grow so it won't show now but it will in time.

JF: the rationale of what we are doing, why we are doing it and where we are going is what is needed so we can explain fully when asked. PDG confirmed that this is in the strategic documents.

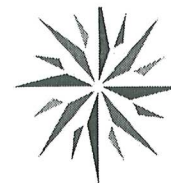
ACTION: agreement to be reached on cost per head data to be provided to Trustees

ESW418. Report from Director of School Improvement

- i. Written report, to include Attendance, Outcomes, Safeguarding and SEN update

TH explained that the data had not changed as there has been no data drop, but the reporting now is showing percentages. TH confirmed that she will go back to see if it can be done for attendance.

TH: we are all worried about exclusions and all we can do is support every school and make sure that everything is in place before it gets to that stage. MS spoke about DCC admitting that there are not enough alternative provisions in the county for children and they are not making plans to build any at the moment. TH explained ESW's focus is to ensure teachers have access to and are trained in supporting those pupils at grass roots level. JF asked if dealing with difficult students is part of the teacher training? MS confirmed that the new ECTF training has lessons on how to talk to children. Experienced teachers are finding that previous methods pre-COVID are not working as the children are so de-regulated.



TH commented that all children are monitored so that teachers know what children are struggling with and in which lessons they need special provisions put in place. We are increasing all of those specialist provisions in school to better serve those young people so they can all access the full curriculum. MS noted that it is difficult recruiting into the TA profession.

KK asked if we are doing anything SEND specific for Board as these papers really show that what we are doing on SEND is not working. The reasons are clear but we need to know what are we doing about this. TH stated that the Inclusion Lead is the final recruitment 0.2 to support coaching and identification of SEND as we still have to get it right at grass roots. We need to make sure that teachers are using the right strategies in the classrooms. There are so many de-regulated pupils coming back from COVID that there is an adverse impact on capacity. KK asked if 0.2 was enough and how does the Board know what we are doing is good enough?

TH confirmed that we are involved with the CST and QSG organisations, sharing ideas and best practices. It is our biggest push in our schools. MS added that the HT's would say that they want a full-time lead. The paper work is so big to support these SEND needs. We are looking at putting more people in schools as someone centrally may not deliver what they need on the ground so we need this level in school. TH confirmed that the central person will upskill others and who will then impact the learners on the ground. We don't want a group of experts in central positions that don't impact the learners.

TH added that adaptive teaching is a big CPD focus. When we started with curriculum, we were looking at the 'what' we are teaching. Now we are looking at the 'how' we are teaching. Teachers using different strategies to engage pupils at their right levels with the same 'what'. The DCQI's have done some training across the Trust with the CDL's and Jon Eaton (Research School) has supported HTs to understand what that could look like so this is a big push for us going forward. To make sure they pupils are getting the high quality without it being watered down. Some children are finding the whole routine difficult post COVID. KK asked about the increase in demand regarding safeguarding being due to more referrals or more complex referrals. TH replied that there are many more EH referrals and they are more complex. A number of families are struggling more than ever now, including financially which is a huge demand on a DSL. We are hoping to fine tune to support Primaries in particular in terms of making these referrals and ideally, we need more people at an admin level to complete the paper work.

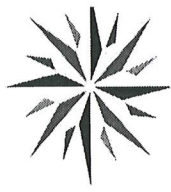
AF commented on the PSC and the CDL presentations that were excellent.

Paul Sampson, chair of Coombeshead, has made suggestions to improve communication between the Trust and the LGB's, for example being asked at the chairs' forum to share the good things and challenges currently at each LGB. MS added that he has come up with other ideas to improve the communication and these will be taken forward next year.

ESW419. Report from Finance Director and COO

i. Finance Director and COO Report

PDG noted that the energy contract went to market on the 25 April. SW confirmed that the Gas has been contracted at an increase of 285%. Electricity is expected to show a 250% increase and the broker will go to the market in the next couple of weeks to finalise this amount. PDG advised that the FC agreed that we would use some reserves (around £1.12m) to cover this additional cost for the coming year so that schools are not hit suddenly with the need to make cuts in the budget for 2022/2023. SW stated that this supports why we have a reserving strategy.



PDG commented that the lack of noise from Government means there may not be any additional support. MS noted that if the Government do decide to give some money to schools it would be great, however, schools are not presenting a united voice as the energy contracts are running out at varying times across the schools. The noise is increasing through ASCL and CST and we will continue to fight. But if nothing comes forward then we will be looking at making savings from 2023/2024, similar to the kind of cuts we made in 2011. LY said that the Government will have to step in. MS agreed that it would be amazing if they did but we have to budget on the basis that they will not. Our priority would be protecting teachers in front of pupils in the classrooms. SW added that some schools now across the country will be having to make cuts now. LY asked about after school clubs that use our facility, are we looking at what we are charging for using our facilities? SW agreed this is a good point as schools would not be open until 10pm at night just for teaching so it is something we are going to have to look at.

JS commented that she is hearing a lot about how energy costs are going to affect personal and family budgets but it is the impact that it is going to have on schools that has yet to be a focus. How can we amplify the messages around this to Government to highlight the cuts that are going to be made that will have a detrimental impact on students? MS said in the past we had the support from parents for school funding but we are not going to see the same traction from parents as there will be a doubling of working poor and disadvantaged. LY commented that in October, when energy costs rise again, we will be having a large percentage of pupils where school is going to be the warmest place they will be all day and where they get food. SW added that there may be adjustments to the schools funding formula if the energy prices do not actually come back down again but this will be not be immediate. The broker does not see a recovery in the market for the foreseeable future. AF agreed as it is a supply and demand issue as 40% of the supply into Europe has been reduced.

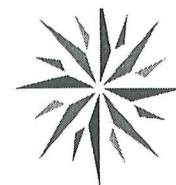
PDG reiterated that our reserve policy is there and it is holding us in good stead. MS confirmed that the reserve is there for a rainy day but in 2 years' time it will not be there so we may need to make large budget cuts. SW noted that other schools will hit the wall way before we do so the Government will have to do something. If you are a LA school DCC are not going to let you set a deficit budget and the ESFA are not either (unless you have reserves to cover it).

PDG commented that cyber security seems to be all human error and thanks SW for the detail in the report. SW confirmed that there was no individual significant issue.

ESW420. SWIfT update from Martin Smith

MSw – introduced himself and played the video (link [HERE](#)). There is more information in the prospectus you can see how each of the programs works and there is more information. MSw confirmed that the KPI's for this year have been exceeded in nearly all areas. SWIfT has a strong central team with people with a lot of experience at Kingsbridge and Colyton and the 2 hub model adds additional strength eliminating duplication. Supporting that, SWIfT have specialist support from ESW Shared Services, in the form of financial management planning of excellent quality and enables us to plan effectively with areas like staffing and the procurement and implementation of a new CRM system.

SWIfT works with some great partners, like Kingsbridge Research School and also Leading Schools South West, which has close ties to ESW, who are all able to leverage each other's networks. In addition, it has strong relationships with MATs and former Teaching School Alliances which allows



for capacity fluctuations. A wider programme of conferences, professional communities and training courses enriches SWIFT's offering to schools.

MSw explained that next year the priority areas will be the 2-year programmes which will enter into their second year so the workflow will double. They are also hoping to get funding for a new Pupil Premium programme, in partnership with the Kingsbridge Research School. Following the new Government White paper announcements, he explained that they have to address their strategy and move from a school facing model to a MAT facing model.

SWIFT applied to become an ITT accredited provider and missed out by 1 mark, however they will apply again in the second window. Many suppliers failed to meet the criteria for the with only 80 of the 220 applicants being successful. In this area only Exeter university was successful.

LY asked if about the alternative options in our area if we are offerings are not selected? MSw responded that the Teaching School Hub engage with about 250 (50%) of schools in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay... the remaining 250 that sit outside that have differing requirements, for example, if a school does not have a new teacher then they will not engage with the ECF training so they will not approach SWIFT. In addition, there tends to be a low staff turnover in many of the areas. MSw explained that SWIFT has about 80% of the Early Career Teacher market and that for NPQ's it is about 50% of the market (national average is 40%). There are non-local alternatives on offer via Babcock who partner with the Ambition Institute. The Church of England has its own NPQ's and there are other providers. MSw added that increasingly some of the larger MAT's are offering their own internal Professional Development.

MS added that for us to have 50% of the market is good. Our marketing is looking to increase that percentage.

LY ask if it was a condition of ESW that all schools and management partnerships sign up? MS confirmed that all our schools sign up with SWIFT, even management partnerships.

JS noted that the Board need to make sure that the KPI's are going to be met to keep our reputation as a Teaching School Hub. So, this is good that these have been achieved as this has not been achieved nationally. Do we have any clarity on whether the hubs will set their own KPI's (like this year) or if the DfE will set these? MSw responded saying that we don't know at this stage about the KPI's and delivery plans from the DfE. LY questioned if we know what the competitors KPI's are and if not, can we find them out? MSw did not have this information.

MS commented on the quality of the video. It is excellent at capturing the simplicity of what SWIFT is. LY agreed. TH added that teaching school and research school are a real pull when we are recruiting.

The Trustees thanked Martin for his presentation.

ESW421. Governance

- i. Feedback from Chairs' Forum
As Above
- ii. Matters arising from LGBs
Trustees approved the appointment of the new Governors on the LGB's as indicated, including Charlie Statham at the UTC.
- iii. Governor training
Covered in TH's report



ESW422. Policies

- i. Policies – for review and approval

#	Policy Name	Responsibility	Last Updated	Any Changes
i	Volunteers in School Policy	TH/BT	March 2021	
ii	Menopause Policy	MS	New	
iii	Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints Policy	MS/LY	New	
iv	Complaints Policy	MS/LY	December 2021	Staff updates

- i. Volunteers in School Policy: Approved
- ii. Menopause policy: AF appointed as responsible Trustee and AF to email PTD with any comments.
- iii. Managing Serial unreasonable Complaints Policy:
PDG suggested that we have something in each establishment about how people respect our staff. MS asked if it was the right message to put on our website? LY suggested that we have something like ESW respecting our staff work life balance which can lead into this. Policy Approved.
- iv. Complaints Policy: Approved

ESW423. Items signed on behalf of the trust and significant matters to be brought to the Board

MS noted that we had signed an agreement with the TUC.

MS wanted the Board to be aware that there was a tribunal held against one of our schools in relation to SEND. The school and the Trust found to be completely exonerated.

ESW424. NLG External Review of Governance Update

- i. Recommendations from Jackie Eason
JE presented the key findings to the Trustees and the presentation has been uploaded to the Teams site [here](#).

LY offered to host at his expense a function for Trustees, Members, Governors, and Heads and Members at his venue in Torquay after the next Board meeting. All Trustees were in support of this idea and thanked LY for his generosity

Next Board Meeting: -

Thursday 14 July 2022 at 5pm at Coombeshead Academy