



Board Meeting Minutes – Part I

Wednesday 8 December, 2021 – 6.30pm

Microsoft TEAMS

Attendees: Peter Di Giuseppe (PDG), Matthew Shanks (MS), Jeremy Fothergill (JF), David Potter (DP), Barrie Taylor (BT), Graham Austin, (GA), Annelie Fearon (AF),
In attendance: Stuart White (SW), Tracy Hannon (TH)
Apologies: Jenny Sutton (JS), Lindsay Yelland (LY), Kellie Knott (KK)
Notes: Pippa Truman Davies (PTD)
Quorum: 50% of the total number of Non-Executive Directors (4, not including MS)

MS to depart at 7.20pm so the Board are to hear his CEO report first and then will continue with the agenda items in order.

ESW382. Report from CEO

PDG – ask for comments on the CEO report

- Strategic plan and rag rating
- SI capacity framework
- Attendance levels
- Research carried out nationally into schools' views on joining an academy

MS – expects attendance to go down next week following the recent announcement and many anxious parents will keep their children at home. There were 19 staff off at Kingsbridge today, 18 at Teign, 15 at Coombeshead, and 7 at Dartmouth with COVID related illness or issues. People are working hard and it is quite difficult. Educational provision is not as good as it can be but it is out of our control. The concern is for the children who have not been back at school since September. We are fighting to get them back in but we don't have the capacity to do that as we don't have the same capacity of pastoral and support staff in order to do it.

GA – will they extend the Christmas break do you think?

MS – no – we don't anticipate that. They want children in school so they can be supported.

AF – has received a letter from Kingsbridge about the testing that they are being asked to do.

MS – this is the 3rd time that this letter has gone out. Last time we had 10 children across the Trust that were tested in schools.

PDG – asked SW what the impact was on Shared Services.



SW – no major impact yet

DP – do we have any vaccine refusers or challenges across the Trust at all?

MS – we do and the latest isolation guidance for unvaccinated people means they have to isolate for 10 days. This means that their classes have to be covered by colleagues. The numbers are small though.

MS – wanted the Trustees to look at the organisational chart. We (MS/TH/SW) are mapping the succession planning for the next 5 years.

MS – wanted Trustees to review the Complaints Policy which the ESFA pointed out was not compliant.

MS left the meeting

ESW378. Apologies

Apologies received from Jenny Sutton and Lindsay Yelland

ESW379. Declarations of interest & Directors statement

None

ESW380. Minutes

- i. Minutes of previous Board meeting, 11 October 2021 – Part I and 2 attached

All confirmed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

ESW381. Matters arising from the previous meeting.

Attendance data is only going to PDG. Trustees in agreement that they did not need to receive the weekly information. PDG to report if there were exceptional circumstances

PDG – confirmed all actions completed.


ESW383. Report from Director of School Improvement

PDG – FTE numbers were lower than last year.

TH – difficult to compare year on year due to COVID last year. Children are not engaged which is becoming an additional challenge for staff. When staff are absent children react differently to the temporary replacement which can cause further issues.

AF – are the trends consistent across the schools in regards to the FTE and the % of non-disadvantaged compared to disadvantaged pupils.

TH – Kingsbridge has fewer disadvantaged pupils and have more FTE than the other secondary



schools so the figures can make the issue look bigger than it is. We are also looking at the 'ready to learn' referrals in relation to the disadvantaged/non-disadvantaged numbers. So we can check that this is not purely down to bad teaching or a bad set of activities.

DP – we have had a few challenges organising meetings of the Performance and Standards Committee this term with KK being absent. Other members of the Board have now attended and the meetings have happened. Are the Trustees happy for DP to continue to take on the caretaker role and are there other Trustees who can join on a more permanent basis? The PSC is really taking shape and will provide valuable impact for the Board.

BT – thanked DP for taking on the role in KK's absence. BT keen to join the PSC formally.

AF – confirmed her wish to be involved with the PSC.

DP – post COVID we will be requesting Trustees to go into schools and witness the work in action.

TH – the last PSC was really helpful and challenging. It provided a way forward to demonstrate the journey of SI.

BT – there is a great job being done by TH on the SI strategy.

GA – also enjoyed the last meeting, in particular the journey the Trust is on the with the common curriculum. We should confirm the constitution of the PSC.

DP – we will have a revised membership of DP, KD-K, JS, TH, KK, AF and BT. GA will be invited and will join when he can.

ESW384. Report from Finance Director and COO

JF – confirmed that relating to the activities of this financial year so far, everything is going fine. There are 3 major capital expenditure projects planned approved by the FC

1. New maths block at Teign
2. Upgrade of the Arts buildings at Coombeshead
3. Building a new catering centre at Kingsbridge

PDG – confirmed that there were no questions relating to the H&S and Cybersecurity reports.

PDG – invited SW to speak about the annual accounts

SW – stated that there were no issues. For the 10th year running we have had a perfect audit. We remain in a strong financial position with positive reserves and strong cash positions.

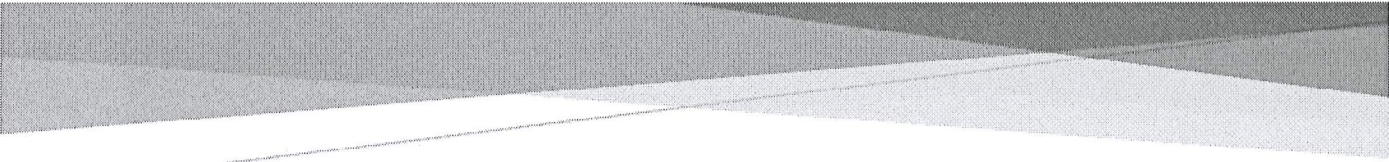
SW – Finance Committee have recommended to this Board that the Annual Report and Accounts to be approved by this Board along with the Letter of Representation (LOR).

DP – pointed out an error on the projected income 23/24. Is this income projection on strong roll going forward?

SW – confirmed.

AF – looking at the secondary schools there are deficits and Dartmouth stands out.

SW – regarding the capital projects are not impacting the deficits at all, with the exception of Kingsbridge. The rest of the projects are being funded by capital grants. Dartmouth is running a



deficit budget as it has a small roll at secondary level. We are looking to retain and attract pupils to the school and this cost money i.e. expanding the curriculum offer. But it has healthy reserves. SW and ES-H working together on a revised strategy including a re-promote/launch the school.

AF – is there a natural source in Dartmouth for additional students to add to the roll?

SW – the challenge is that its own catchment area has always struggled to draw in the children. MS has agreed with Devon to re-demarcate the catchment area for Stoke Fleming and Blackawton so they feed into Dartmouth (not Kingsbridge). It survives by pulling in children from outside the catchment area. Currently we bus in 80/100 children from Torbay daily. This needs to continue as Dartmouth is a long way off being sustainable just taking in children from the catchment area.

PDG – as there were no further questions or comments, asked for the annual report and accounts and the LOR to be signed off.

All agreed and approved.

JF – supports the change in the catchment area for Dartmouth and stated his support for the school.

ESW385. Governance

i. Risk Register and Internal Assurance 21-22

PDG – we are working together with MS/AH/GA on a format of the Risk Register which will be presented to the Board and Members.

ii. Chairs' Forum report and matters arising from LGB's

PDG – the Ambition Institute and actions from it were discussed. In particular the area of communication. It was agreed to produce each year a simple one page summary of the Annual Accounts for the LGBs to give Governors a flavour of the size of the Trust.

BT – this is in particular useful to the new Governors who have come joined.

PDG – exit interviews were also discussed, in terms of understanding why staff were leaving.

PDG – some dissatisfaction about the NGA skills audit and its relevance to LGB's.

PDG – training program was discussed.

BT – thought the engagement of Governors regarding training was low. Asked what can we do to improve attendance. It is not ok for the LGB to not attend training. We need to impress on the LGB's what the minimum requirement is.

TH – indicated that it is harder now to capture who has watched the recordings. We now offer more training sessions which may be more overwhelming for Governors.

PDG – we need to look at accurate data including those who watched the recordings. If it does not improve we need to think about

1. How we recruit Governors
2. How we spell out the training expectations
3. How Chairs encourage their Governors to attend.

BT – highlighted that there are obstacles about becoming a Governor at the moment and we need

them.

PDG – agreed that it was a balance.

TH – some chairs are better than others about asking Governors about the training they attended and the impact. It is also down to the clerks.

PDG – parent surveys were discussed.

DP – pointed out that this was also discussed at the PSC and the idea of broadening the questions.

iii. Changes to governors LGB's

PDG – asked PTD to explain the sheet.

PTD – explained that there are several Governors in the process of being onboarded at Dartmouth and South Hubs. Additionally, Christow, Kingsbridge and UTC are actively recruiting Governors.

ACTION: Full picture of LGB Governors to be produced by PTD for the next Board meeting

ESW386. Report on Safeguarding and SEN

This will be covered in the Director of School Improvement's report.

ESW387. Policies – for review and approval

<u>#</u>	<u>Policy Name</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Last Updated</u>	<u>Any Changes</u>
i.	Pay Policy	MS/TH	March 2020	No
ii.	Complaints Policy	MS	October 2019	Yes

PDG – no objections to the policies

All approved both policies

ESW388. Items signed on behalf of the trust and significant matters to be brought to the Board.

No further matters.

Meeting closed at 8.08pm

Next meeting: Board – Thursday 27 January. 6.30pm



