

Education South West

Board Meeting Minutes – Part I

Thursday 16 March, 2022 – 6.30pm

Microsoft TEAMS

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

ESW401. Apologies

Apologies were noted from Jenny Sutton and Barrie Taylor

ESW402. Declarations of interest & Directors statement

None were declared by the Trustees

ESW403. Minutes

- i. Minutes of previous Board meeting, 27 January 2022 – Part I and 2
All Trustees approved the minutes as a true record of the meeting

ESW404. Matters arising from the previous meeting

Trustees discussed the possibility of meeting in person in future. The preference is to meet in person with the hybrid option being the exception not the rule. KCC was decided as the location of the next meeting in May 2022. The July 2022 meeting will be in one of the North Hub schools.

Management partnership meetings

MS stated that these are being arranged with the PA from St Cuthbert Mayne and that there was to be a meeting with the diocese and the LA tomorrow where we were to give feedback regarding the areas we have actioned. The meeting is being re-scheduled with LY and GA in attendance for later in the term or the beginning of the Summer Term as the HT has contracted COVID.

Church articles

MS commented that our lawyers have signed off final version of the Articles and they have gone to Christina Mabin to take to the CEOCC, which is the Church's national body for sign off. The final version now includes reference to the UTC. JF noted that he would like to read them and MS forwarded the document to JF

Dartmouth Hub

DP restated his interest in being involved in the Dartmouth Hub. Initial meetings are in the process of being arranged.

All other matters arising were concluded.

ESW405. Trust and education matters from CEO

i. Update on applications to join ESW

KEVICC

Here followed a PART 2 discussion

Wynstream and Montgomery

MS commented that the partnership has now started and that Elise Redman will be moving to be the head there after Easter voluntarily for a two-term secondment.

MS also noted that he is meeting the leadership team and the HT of the Exmouth Community College on Friday with a view to agreeing a management partnership for 18 months. They are a 2,500 pupil school and have looked at other Trusts. They have selected ours as one they would like to work with and we will see where that goes.

Here followed a PART 2 discussion

White Paper

The White Paper was due to come out yesterday. It will be out before the end of this term (in two or three weeks). This is the first one issued in relation to education since 2016.

- 1) RSC is to be reorganised now into 9 areas not 8 areas and they are looking at arranging the DfE to the same format. The view is that accountability follows money so Ofsted will look at MATS more than schools in the future.
- 2) LA's failed as there were so many of them that they could not be controlled. There are now so many MAT's with a few small schools which is potentially uncontrollable. So there is a suggestion that there will be a move to a model of 600 MAT's nationally to have between 35 to 60 schools in them which is a 100's of millions of pounds of responsibility.

DP indicated that he was worried about the structural approach of the DfE. Moving things around on the 'chess board' does not equal strategy and he believes that this shows a lack of leadership from the DfE. He questioned where was the 'National talent strategy' – where are they addressing the big issues. The white paper needs to focus on how we are going to stand out and generate leadership around what we believe is important for the future talent of our region. DP also noted that Inspections were methods of reinforcing what we know, showing that the work we are putting into the schools so it is evidence of us doing great things.

MS said he was proposing to bring a paper to the board the next time regarding succession planning and the future strategic direction of the Trust. MS, SW and TH have been doing an awful lot of work around this and it would be good to share this with you in a face to face environment.

PDG noted that we will have a wider discussion at the next Board Meeting.

ii. Strategic Plan

DP asked about the table showing the first, second and third choices in the strategic plan, commenting that the numbers for Dartmouth seemed very low. MS said these figures were from December and can now be updated showing KCC 217, Dartmouth 75, Coombeshead 164 and Teign at 210. DP agreed that these figures made more sense. DP noted the open actions about the staff development, showing that ESW were not able to deliver on some of the ambitions to date. However, it is positive that MS is still pushing to deliver this.

KK questioned the use of the document and the purpose of bringing it to the Board. It is a question around how we are assured that we are delivering on this plan as there are not many updates on the March 2022 document. KK asked how can we hold ourselves accountable for the delivery of the strategy?

MS commented that the version of the document in the pack has not included the updates from TH, SW and MS and apologised for this. The Clerk has not been sent the updated version by the PA. This would be sent. He explained that the key focus is on the strategic objectives and how we deliver against those strategic objectives which feed through into each of the school's plan. The Trust can influence everything that happens at a Trust level but it is the role of the highly paid and skilled HT's to manage this at a school level. They are delivering this on a closer level within their own particular schools. When you review the document and see the actions that are 'red', this applies to the whole Trust, whole staffing, CPD and so on so we are probably reporting more conservatively that is reality. We are still dealing with the day-to-day COVID issues and all the other knock on effects from there which makes it more difficult to deliver on those things. MS noted that he is pleased as to where we are in relation to this plan and also aware that the goal posts might be moving so the plan needs to evolve accordingly. The plan focuses on areas which should not change such as outcomes, staff development and Growing leadership.

KK's concern was around how the Board is holding the Executives to account for delivering on these strategic objectives

iii. Verbal update

As above and Part 2.

ESW406. Report from Director of School Improvement

i. School Improvement Development


PDG commented on the number (11) informal complaints around bullying at BLA. TH noted that we are starting to collect this information across the Trust as it is becoming an issue. These have been dealt with by the HT. We are just being transparent and this is something we are now looking at, including why it is happening.

PDG asked if TH was confident that the complaints are settled and signed off. TH stated that we have involved PG as Executive Head to support in some cases. The concern is more around the Behaviour policies we have established and are they tight enough. TH said we are able to reassure parents in terms of the action that is taken after the complaint has been brought to the Head, but we are working on how we can stop it from happening.

ii. Safeguarding and SEN update

KK referred to the table in section 6 and wanted to know what the table was representing. She asked if it shows the number of things that happen in each school (MASH, early help referrals)? So Teign has no early help referrals? TH commented that this is the first time that we have collected this and this has identified that we don't have the systematic way of recording this information and the schools found it hard to collate this data so we need to look at this. Some schools are therefore 'blank' at the moment as they don't have the starting points for their early help sessions. KK added that it is difficult to look at these figures without the added context of disadvantaged pupil numbers.

KK asked about the SEND training proposal for SENDCo at £2.5k per staff member – should this be continued with in light of the SEND review Green Paper that will be published and what that might say around SENDCo qualifications for the training of staff? TH confirmed that this was a plan that was brought to the Board a few meetings ago but that no names have been put forward yet and it will start in September. MS added that this came about because there were so many SCN / early help referrals coming through that they were swamping the SENDCo and we needed also to look at succession planning. We have no SENDCo in KCC presently but we do have someone who can step up in DAR and also across the primaries. MS said that he thought the situation would not change once the Green Paper has been published. KK was just cautious about spending money if there is a



possibility of a national change to qualifications and training. MS responded that we would not be spending until September 2022.

GA commented on the SEND training for Governors yesterday which referenced the number of referrals and the level of support coming back from Devon and in some cases, a year's delay to get the required support. It was noted that there is a 60 week wait on referrals to educational psychologists which is a long time in education. Is there anything in the Trust we can do to improve this?

MS confirmed that Devon has bought in a person to oversee SEND and there have been some off the record private conversations with three of our SENDCo's. Devon is particularly poor in this area and also in regards to Educational Psychologists. They are very hard to find and so we are looking at employing one for the Trust but there are none around. It is not a solution to the problem but we are trying and all schools are in the same position.

MS is having conversations with Melissa Caslake who is overseeing the whole of Devon in regards to SCN. She has a good picture now of what is going on in Devon.

iii. Report from governor training

LY asked about Governor training and the low attendance from the Governors at our Primary LGB's. TH responded that we have asked the Chairs to go back to their LGB's to ask what the barriers are to attendance. We need to improve how we promote and capture attendance. The training quality and quantity is thorough and not a month goes by where we have no training session. We can identify the primary sessions that Governors must attend and the others are optional which might help but then the variance of timings that work for Governors is large. We need to capture who is watching the training recordings. LY suggested that for the core sessions they are accessible online and the Governors are given a time limit by which the training must be done in their own time. LY also suggested that core training was delivered at the LGB meetings. TH said we are continually trying to improve and we listen to Governors needs. We also have to understand the impact the training has on their ability to challenge and support their schools.

ACTION: TH to consider LY ideas on Governor Training with AH.

AF commented on the Governors Forum recently. Adrian Hines did an amazing job of hosting the session and covering some really important subjects. It was interactive and there was a lot of engagement and people asked a lot of questions. Anecdotally there seems to be a good level of engagement and participation from the Governors.

iv. Progress report on outcomes for next year
No further comments from Trustees.

ESW407. Update from Finance Director and COO


i. Shared Services Development (verbal)

MS confirmed that the verbal part of this report will be picked up at the next meeting.

ii. Finance Director and COO Report

SW noted that the warnings about cost increases are for information rather than dire warnings. PDG noted that we started the reserves on £2.7m and it reduces to £1.7m and asked if this was due to the increases in pay and energy costs? SW disagreed as the financial summary does not include the revised budgets that we are currently working on for next year. We are in budget season now and are working on this. The Trust is in a good position now and individually a number of schools are in a good position.

AF recalled that the budget for this year was already high for energy costs as we have been leaving all



the doors open in schools as required by the COVID situation. SW commented that the figures were based on average usage pre-covid factored up with price increase. In terms of reducing our consumption of gas and electric then we have to be realistic as this will not happen overnight. We have long term plans to become a carbon neutral Trust but we have to be realistic as we have varying quality of lighting and heating systems and limited capital available to upgrade them over time. If the energy prices remain high or continue to rise there might be an energy grant – but this is not guaranteed so is not planned for.

PDG asked for further questions on SW's whole report. PDG noted that the number of cyber security errors is quite low. However, it was noted that an exclusion letter was sent to the wrong person. MS noted that this was an individual administrative error. KK observed that it would be useful to see these trends over a longer period of time to see if there are patterns of behaviour. SW agreed that we can do that. GDPR audits and ongoing training across the Trust are being rolled out by our DPO. Through the COVID period people's consciousness of GDPR may have waned. SW agreed to look through recurring themes as suggested by KK.

iii. School Resource Management Self-Assessment Checklist
Trustees have reviewed the checklist and have no comments.

ESW408. Teaching School Hub update

JF indicated that there is a meeting tomorrow. The core activity is doing very well, better than predicted and the only area of concern is the sponsorship line for additional income that has not been fruitful. This is probably due to the impact of COVID and the lack of physical training activity so people have not been using it to sponsor a course. SW confirmed that we are light on sponsorship income but we have not generated a loss as we did not put any expenditure against it as it was a little bit 'pie in the sky'. It should make a surplus in this financial year. MS confirmed that Martin is doing a fantastic job.

ESW409. Governance

i. Feedback from Chairs' Forum

PDG and TH attended the Chair's forum and it was suggested that we have trained people to deal with exclusion panels. However, it became clear that the holding of panels during the working day would be an issue as some governors may not be able to participate as they could lose income. A suggestion was put forward that we pay people. LY confirmed how difficult it was to put together a competent panel within one LGB, especially if you take the chairs out of it as using Chairs has been criticised by Devon CC. MS said that a chair can be on another Governing Body for a different school's exclusion panel but not on their own LGB panel.

PDG said that the proposal for being paid was made on the basis that there would be a permanent small group of people that are exclusion panel trained. MS said the exclusion panels are rare and we can deal with expenses and loss of earnings. PDG commented that the Chairs were concerned about the large amount of work involved for volunteers to go through and then the time to attend a meeting it is a big ask, in addition to the fact that they need to be experienced. This was a discussion rather than a suggestion.

KK noted that there possibly is a training gap with the new people who have joined the LGB's this year. People get too much into the details. We need to be clear about the expectation of the role. MS said that the expectation has changed from the Devon inclusion team and now the Governors need to know far more detail. Many more now are being over turned and go to independent review.

JF agreed that Devon were too strapped for funding to cover excluding a child that they were fighting tooth and nail to prevent it. PDG asked Trustees if there was a way forward with this? KK volunteered to discuss this further outside of this meeting and come back to it at another Board meeting. LY confirmed that Trustees could also attend permanent exclusion panels. With a Trust of this size we should be able to get together a fairly flexible group of people. PDG said we need to unpick the issues if the LGB's are reluctant to deal with an exclusion hearing.

ACTION: PDG to arrange for KK / LY / AH to discuss LGB Exclusions Panel options and come back to the next Board meeting.

DP noted that payment should be an option so we attract people with strong negotiation skills to support the Trust. It could be a case for case discussion.

ii. Matters arising from LGBs

Trustees valued the summaries from the LGB's and approved the LGB Governor changes listed.

iii. ESW Board Induction Pack

All Trustees thought the document useful resource and should be added as a standard document for new Trustees. PTD to update annually.

ESW410. Policies

i. Policies – for review and approval

#	<u>Policy Name</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Last Updated</u>	<u>Any Changes</u>
	Data	SW/BT	March	
i	Protection Policy		2021	
ii	Health and Safety Policy	SW/AF	March 2021	
	Information Security Policy	SW/DP	March 2021	
iii				
iv	Volunteers in School Policy	TH/BT	March 2021	
v	DBS Policy	SW/KK	March 2021	

All approved aside from the Volunteer Policy which should be carried forward to the next Board meeting.

ESW412. Items signed on behalf of the trust and significant matters to be brought to the Board

No further comments from Trustees.

Next Board Meeting
Monday 23 May 2022 at 6.30pm