



Education South West

Board Meeting Minutes:

6pm Thursday 23 March 2023

Coombeshead Academy

Attendees:

Matthew Shanks (MS), Graham Austin (GA), Annelie Fearon (AF), Barrie Taylor (BT), Adrian Hines (AH)

In attendance:

Stuart White (SW), Tracy Hannon (TH)

Apologies:

Kellie Knott (KK), David Potter (DP), Jenny Sutton (JS)

Notes:

Pippa Truman Davies (PTD)

Quorum:

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

	Agenda Item
ESW 459	<p>Apologies, Declarations of interest</p> <p>Apologies were noted and accepted from KK, DP and JS</p>
ESW 460	<p>Minutes of previous meeting & matters arising</p> <p>The minutes of the Board meeting on the 2 February 2023 were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p>ACTION 1: MS to share risk register when updated, with Trustees. (Complete)</p> <p>ACTION 2: DP and SW to meet to discuss ESW's carbon footprint and energy consumption to review options. (ongoing)</p> <p>ACTION 3: TH to include SEND with the data presented to Trustees. (Complete)</p> <p>ACTION 4: AH asked TH that the attendance data be re-looked at so it is more accurately presented to Trustees. (Complete)</p> <p>ACTION 5: The action plan to be tabled at the next meeting so Trustees can update the Trust strategic goals (Complete)</p> <p>ACTION 6: Code of Conduct for Employees Policy to be tabled at the next Board meeting (Complete)</p>
ESW 461	<p>Shared Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Any questions arising from the Shared Services report <p><i>BT wanted to know why the UTC figures going forward seem to be dropping suddenly. SW noted that the forecast was always going to go down before going up as we started a school with no cash in the bank. We run it, allowing the school to go into an "overdraft". The size has of this has increased because of the other factors affecting all schools; energy and staff costs. Wage inflation and other</i></p>



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	<p>pressures and a successful growing roll is having more of an impact. We are ahead in the plan due to the increased roll, but we have lagged funding now like any other school. So, the funding does not meet the requirement for the increased roll until the year after – it is a delayed cash flow. It will eventually catch-up and in a 5 year plan it bottoms out in year 3 and then it starts to increase. It is a timing event and not an accumulating irrecoverable loss. It is a bespoke scenario for a 'start up' school with lagged funding and pupil growth.</p> <p><i>AH agreed that this makes sense, however stated that you will never recover the money that you have missed out on each year.</i> SW replied that you will, but it will be a year later. He explained that the deficit will recover in 4 or 5 years from now we start to have surplus budgets. If we were funded in year it would not dip down so far and we would not need to run a surplus budget. <i>AH agreed but said that you would never get that money back and you always have to cover that short fall from the Trust.</i> SW stated that we don't lose anything, it is down to cash flow and timing. <i>AH stated that it is only timing if the roll starts to fall and you never recover that.</i> MS explained that the you always fund for the year after - lagged funding is an argument that we continually have with the DfE. SW stated that if we shut the school we would lose out but if the school continues infinitely you get the money. When you open a new school, you get advanced funding but we could not get this for the UTC. We also cannot get growth fund from Devon which is available for schools with growing rolls, for the UTC. MS confirmed that we have a meeting with the UTC tomorrow and this will be on the agenda.</p> <p>SW confirm that the key is that all that money is not at risk. We have to pay for teachers for the increasing roll and then they give us proportionate increased funding. <i>AH said that you only ever catch up when you have a roll that has dropped and you have fewer teachers.</i> MS said that you don't want that to happen. <i>AH said that you are never going to recover that fund.</i> SW reiterated that <i>you will always recover the funds, with a timing delay.</i></p> <p><i>GA enquired about the likely date for Wynstream joining the Trust.</i> SW confirmed that it would be on the 1st April 2023. MS commented on the amount of effort, work and time that has gone through to get Wynstream happen has been incredible and SW has overcome hurdles and his effort is to be recognised.</p> <p><i>AF wanted to know more about reserve planning. She noted that there is a significant difference between the summary position in the first example and the reserve planning numbers where the deficits have to be cut significantly. The net result is that we stay in surplus. Is there a certain level of surplus you plan to achieve?</i></p> <p>SW noted that there is a minimum reserve target that SW plans for each school that we manage schools towards. At different points in time we may have to be more draconian with some schools and more lenient with others with regards to the reserves each school carry. GA stated that there is a document that we can share that shows the current position. <i>AH asked about EAL as the UTC has been covered just now.</i> SW explained that EAL joined the Trust with a legacy deficit of about £100k and we can allow this to remain a deficit figure as we are a large MAT. The deficit is not getting any bigger and the classes have not suffered. Over the years it is much better at around £50/60k now. <i>AF noted that we have to cut the</i></p>



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	<p><i>extrapolated budgets significantly to hit these projected reserve numbers. The budget for KCC needs cutting by more than half to hit the reserve budget. SW explained that what you see is a work in progress and it is in possible because it has to be. AF understands this but what impact does it potentially have when we cut the deficits by that much to hit those reserve targets.</i></p> <p>MS said that there is not a right answer. We need to be financially solvent. We also need to give lots of resources to make education the best it possibly can be within schools. However, neither can co-exist. We have never had as little money since 2010. Per pupil funding is much lower than it has ever been. In addition, we have had unfunded pay rises for support and teaching staff had we have the impact of the rise in utilities prices. Some of our schools will struggle with cuts being made as they have had cuts in the past and are already at bare minimum. We are not increasing class size and not taking away that leadership capacity for the size of the school. KCC has been over staffed in some areas for some time.</p> <p><i>AF asked what are the implication of this for the whole range of schools in terms of teachers, resourcing and operationally within the Trust if those cuts have to be made?</i> MS said we can give you a detailed before and after at the next meeting as this is all being done now by SW in conversation with HT's, Rob Coles and TH. But it is a difficult decision for every school and HT. We have had 3 Ofsted inspections in 4 weeks and yet in 2 of those schools we may have to make staff redundancies. SW added that we are not trying to slash and burn or accumulate massive reserves. We need a little flexibility in the budget or it is not a workable plan.</p> <p><i>BT stated that benchmark data is also useful.</i> MS said the more valuable benchmarking for us is looking at the teacher/pupil ratios and the support staff/pupil ratios across our schools and we can produce this and bring it to the Board. GA noted that we have another finance meeting before the next Board where we can interrogate the budget in greater detail.</p> <p>ACTION 1: MS to bring to next Board benchmarking data showing the teacher/pupil ratios and the support staff/pupil ratios across our schools</p> <p><i>AH asked if there is there any risk around the potential pay award for teachers given the recent industrial action?</i> SW said that we have adjusted the budgets so they include a 3% funding increase. <i>AH asked if there is any danger of a higher pay award?</i> SW agreed but our assumption is that there will be some funding from the DfE but at present they are saying they will not fund a 3% pay rise. MS added that If a 5% increase happens then SW will look at the reserves and this has been discussed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance committee update No finance committee since the last Board.
ESW 462	<p>Education Performance & Safeguarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any questions arising from the DoE report TH stated that attendance is not good enough across the Trust and we are learning from other Trust leaders and the other actions are noted in the report. MS added that it is a problem for everyone at the moment. For us, busses is an issue as if you



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	<p>miss one then that is it so it impacts attendance. Lots of parents are not encouraging pupils going to school. There is a lack of desire for the LA to issue any fining notices. It would be great if we had an attendance officer for each school with a minibus but we have had to cut this. When you look the progress 8 figures where children attend they are far better for those children than the children who don't. It is not the quality of teaching in the class room but it is how to get them there in the first place.</p> <p><i>AF are you confident that issues with attendance and attendance policy has been communicated across all the schools effectively. Is there consistency and good communication regarding implementation of the attendance policies across the Trust?</i></p> <p>ACTION 2: TH/MS to investigate the communication around the attendance policies to parents and carers in all schools across the Trust.</p> <p>TH noted that all the attendance leads across the Trust meet to share expertise and best practice and when we go into schools we are challenging leaders and are looking at evidence. Every school has a trigger point which initiates the sending of a letter. <i>AF agreed but as a parent you want to know that before it happens not when it happens.</i> MS agreed that we need to look at this and also at the language used in the letters and being consistent. Setting up a virtual school across county would be one solution.</p> <p>TH added that you used to look at attendance and it would reflect the quality of teaching in the schools, but we can genuinely say that is not the case currently.</p> <p><i>BT enquired about the level of suspensions. BT praised the data set from Bromcom. What is a suspension rate and they look high compared to national data at secondary level.</i> TH explained that the permanent exclusions are not high but the suspensions are. We are trying to keep people in school but it is not working and we need to ascertain if this is the right place for that child. When a child is suspended, something different has to change or they will do it again so we need to give them a fair chance to be successful. TH confirmed that LGB's have the information about persistent offenders where nothing is changing. We speak to senior leaders about these pupils to see what we are doing, what is working and what they can do better as a school.</p> <p><i>BT asked why MAT schools are quite high but KEVICC is low.</i> TH explained that our permanent exclusions are low compared to the rest of Devon. It is about what can we do differently. MS added that more pupils are reaching the 15+ day level of suspensions in one term than previously. In addition, TH added that we are increasingly see it in primary schools where pupils are deregulated. It is impacting safeguarding and HT wellbeing as the community are not welcoming of these pupils. MS stated that more children looking for additional support which is pulling on DCCs limited resources.</p> <p><i>GA asked if you are having those challenges when you go into the schools asked TH and MS.</i></p>



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	<p>TH explained that we are more challenging when visiting schools but the Ofsted inspectors have accepted that we are doing what we can and that we are raising their expectations. However, MS added, that if you have a child with SEND or a need and who is not coping with what is happening in a classroom then we talk about adaptive teaching. <i>BT noted that it would be good data to look on in 6 months, especially for DAR.</i> TH noted that Paul Girardot has done and continues to do an amazing job.</p> <p>ACTION 3: TH/MS to provide a comparison for the number of suspensions and permanent exclusions over time to be made for next Board meeting.</p> <p><i>AH asked about KEVICC and the fact that there is a low suspension rate and a high permanent exclusion rate that suggests that they might be going to straight to permanent exclusions rather than suspending.</i> MS agreed and it needs tightening up. TH added that most of our permanent exclusions and suspensions are the result of persistent disruptive behaviour. At KEVICC, the behaviour breaches tend to be more serious one-off events and result in a more stringent response from the school. KEVICC is not quite there yet but they have a new lead on behaviour which is changing the culture.</p> <p><i>BT asked about disadvantaged pupils and that it is number one on the strategic plan but there is not much information included in the report on this.</i> MS explained that he will talk to that later.</p> <p>TH directed Trustees to the overview with core, enhanced and intensive levels of support. This level of support is working and some of these schools have improved and require less support and some situations have changed and the SI team have responded and increased the level of support accordingly, as in the situation at CHR.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PSC Committee update Meeting to be rescheduled to the Summer term.
ESW 463	<p>Strategic Direction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk register overview MS explained the rationale for the placing some of the risks in their current locations. <p>MS spoke about KCC and its achievements being really positive. The impact of the Ofsted result is being considered. Only 16% of schools across the country have maintained their outstanding status. Tina is worried about the impact on the community. <i>AF believes that it is people's own experiences are good then they will not worry about it and vica versa.</i> MS shared that a communication is planned to the KCC community. TH added that in the Ofsted questions, a result of 60% of parents would recommend the school at KCC.</p> <p>MS noted that role of DCC position has put more stress on other leaders in the Trust but it does bring in more money. It does enable us to grow other leaders within the Trust. MS confirmed that he is not continuing the role beyond December 2023.</p>



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	<p>MS shared that we are seeing the impact of the year 11's now who were in COVID in year 8 and have not retained the learning they should have so expect the outcomes to be lower. It is across lots of schools. This year, the outcome should be ok but next year is the big one and we are more worried about these pupils not being at the level that they should be.</p> <p><i>AH asked about the impact of further increase in utility prices, is this still increasing in risk?</i> MS said that this is high impact and high likelihood. <i>AH asked why the positioning of the 'become vulnerable to reputational loss and take over caused by failing to meet RSC expectations' is in the Med like/impact?</i> MS said that he never wants to be complacent.</p> <p><i>GA noted that we are in a much better place with the risk register and it is clearer.</i> MS thanked AH for his input.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEO report <i>AH asked if the SoD has been updated and reviewed?</i> MS is simplifying the SoD and has reduced it to a key of 3 letters and it is now a much clearer document. The next stage is that it is going to John Pike and then will be shared with GA and AH. It will then come to the Board. • Strategic Plan Review MS said that there will be a new strategic plan to be brought to the Board in July which will be tighter in terms of targets. It will be ready for September 2023, after consultation with the HT's. <i>BT asked if the strategic Objectives the same?</i> MS responded that it will change. Two of them will be combined around the leadership and staff development. There will be a bigger focused on disadvantaged and a briefer strategic plan document for the Board that feeds into the SIP's for the schools. GA noted that having had a number of conversations with Ofsted at a Trust level, the Strategic Objectives were a great resource that we kept referring back to. MS confirmed that you can see the 6 strategic objectives bed rocked throughout the schools and in what the schools are doing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ FOCUS: Objective 6 Ensure disadvantaged pupils make progress at least in line with other pupils ○ Update on Objective 5 Increase quality of education provision and outcomes in all our schools <p>MS stated that we are looking at strategies for the year 11 across the Trust in each of the schools. All schools would like to put on a period 6 for year 11 but this is likely to be poorly attended for children who would probably have done their revision anyway at home for a significant difficult cost. We, the 3 SI leads, TH and myself are heading to the best performing Trust in the country for outcomes on 11 May in Twyford. It is about looking at what they do to obtain their outcomes and bringing it back to ESW. We will consult about the Strategic Objectives with the HT's about which they still feel are relevant going forward, what are our benchmarks that we want to achieve over the next 3 to 4 years and these will naturally feed into their SIP's. GA was hugely supportive. MS said it is very exciting seeing the team and the HT's engaged, especially post Ofsted. GA, Nice to see the senior leaderships team going across Trust</p>



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	MS Catherine Willocks, S Wharf, R Coles, Tina Graham and Steve McShane all went and reviewed DAR today and Paul, the HT welcomed the visit. GA agreed that this is hugely encouraging.																																				
ESW 464	<p>Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">LGB (headlines/minutes) Document to follow by email. Trustees approved in principle the new LGB Governors onboarding the following LGB's.Policies <table><tr><td>1</td><td>Capability of Staff Policy</td><td>MS</td><td>GA</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>Data Protection Policy</td><td>SW</td><td>BT</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>DBS Policy</td><td>SW</td><td>KK</td></tr><tr><td>4</td><td>Flexible Working Policy</td><td>SW</td><td>GA</td></tr><tr><td>5</td><td>Health and Safety</td><td>SW</td><td>AF</td></tr><tr><td>6</td><td>Information Security Policy</td><td>SW</td><td>DP</td></tr><tr><td>7</td><td>Recruitment and Selection Policy</td><td>MS</td><td>GA</td></tr><tr><td>8</td><td>Support Staff Probation Policy</td><td>SW</td><td>GA</td></tr><tr><td>9</td><td>Code of Conduct for Employees Policy</td><td>MS</td><td>AH</td></tr></table> <p>Trustees approved all Policies aside from the Information Security Policy which will be brought forward to the next meeting following DP's approval.</p>	1	Capability of Staff Policy	MS	GA	2	Data Protection Policy	SW	BT	3	DBS Policy	SW	KK	4	Flexible Working Policy	SW	GA	5	Health and Safety	SW	AF	6	Information Security Policy	SW	DP	7	Recruitment and Selection Policy	MS	GA	8	Support Staff Probation Policy	SW	GA	9	Code of Conduct for Employees Policy	MS	AH
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ESW 465	<p>AOB</p> <p><i>BT noted a general concern about HT and staff wellbeing following the negative Ofsted recent press. MS believes that Ofsted is much more improved that it was. In terms of our own staff mental health, the recent Ofsted staff surveys reflected that this was not an issue in all 3 recent Ofsted inspections and ESW came out very positively in all the support we offer and provide to staff. We are going to face some tough staff welfare and staff wellbeing issues as we continue to make cuts. Focus on positivity and what impact will it have on the educational outcomes. SW added that the number of redundancies will be quite small across the Trust and we are looking at some redeployment. It might only be 4 or 5.</i></p> <p>BT commented on the way ESW manages scrutiny of the schools and leadership in a positive way. MS said that what we have within our Trust is 'we' and 'our' and an inclusive language and culture. We support our comments with support not criticism and work together to improve any situation. BT asked We need a regulatory authority</p>																																				



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	in schools to make sure children are safe and that provision in schools is appropriate. In addition, it raises issues around recruitment and resourcing and things have been improved under Amanda Spielman's leadership. The area of concern with the recent situation is that Ofsted published the school inspection report for that school with the HT name and a statement saying she had passed which was perhaps not the right approach at the time.
	Next Meeting: 6pm, Thursday 25 May 2023 Teign School