



Epping Forest Schools Partnership Trust

Held on Thursday 28th March 2019 at 6.45pm
at St John's Primary School, Buckhurst Hill

MINUTES of the TRUSTEES MEETING

	<u>Trustees</u>
*	Lee Batson (Chair)
*	Lesley Duffin
*	Brenda Jarvis
	Gillea Rossetti
*	Sue Sunderland (Vice Chair)
*	Dee Wood
*	James Wood
*	Peter Tidmarsh (CEO)
	<u>Observers/Advisers</u>
*	Elisabeth Nunn (Clerk)

* indicates attendance

(The meeting started at 6.50pm.)

		<u>ACTION</u>
1	Apologies (and reasons for absence); declarations of interest in agenda; plus declaration of Business Interests/Gifts and Hospitality An apology for absence was received and accepted from Mrs Rossetti (illness). There were no declarations. It was confirmed that the Trustees' business interest forms are in line with the Auditors' specifications.	
2	AOB requests for an end-of-meeting consideration a) Response to housing developments. b) Gender Pay Gap. c) Conference Calls.	
3	To approve the Minutes of 4th December 2018 Trustees approved the Minutes of the meeting on 4 th December 2018 and these were signed by the Chair. Matters Arising a) <u>Agenda item 2</u> : The CEO confirmed he has informed the Family and Children's Support Services hub of the information Trustees require	



		<u>ACTION</u>
	<p>regarding the impact of their work. He reported that they have introduced a new system of measuring impact; the first set of data is currently being collated. Mr Tidmarsh will give an update at the summer term Board meeting.</p> <p>b) <u>Agenda item 4f</u>: The CEO confirmed he had circulated the MAT data booklet to Trustees.</p> <p>c) <u>Agenda item 8b</u>: The Chair confirmed that he communicated with all Chairs of Governors in January and had received no responses.</p>	<p>Review impact of FaCSS programmes: July Board agenda</p>
4	<p>To receive a verbal update from the Chair on Trust Membership</p> <p>Rev Batson reported on the following:</p> <p>a) <u>High Beech Primary</u>: Rev Batson was pleased to report that High Beech Primary joined the Trust on January 1st 2019.</p> <p>b) <u>Buckhurst Hill Primary</u>: The Chair reported that Buckhurst Hill Primary School has indicated that it would like to join the Trust; it is currently going out to consultation with stakeholders. The CEO has begun the due diligence process and spent a day at the school with three Headteachers from the Trust; he reported that there was nothing of concern to note. He will now look into the school's estates while Essex Financial Services carry out an external scrutiny of the school's finances. A discussion was held about the way finance has been managed at the school.</p> <p>Q: Are you confident with taking another school into the Trust?</p> <p>A: (CEO) With this school, yes, because of the position they are in. However, with our other associate schools we would potentially look to lengthen their association at this present time.</p> <p>Mr Tidmarsh reported that the Trust continues to support the school. Both the LA and the DfE are in support of it joining the Trust which could be as soon as 1st September or possibly 1st October. After the consultation process is completed, the school will submit its DfE application in May.</p> <p>After discussion, Trustees agreed to accept, in principle, Buckhurst Hill Primary's application to join the Trust. However, they stressed that this is dependent on the outcomes of the due diligence process, particularly with a focus on finance. It was agreed that a formal acceptance would be agreed by Trustees via email if due diligence showed that there were no concerns. If, however, the Trust is not satisfied with any part of the due diligence process, Trustees would need to discuss this further. Mr Tidmarsh agreed to share any concerns with Trustees.</p>	
5	<p>To receive a briefing from the CEO</p> <p>Mr Tidmarsh gave a verbal and Powerpoint presentation. The following, in particular, was noted:</p> <p>a) <u>Headteacher vacancies</u>: Trustees noted the potential number of Headteacher vacancies within the Trust over the next year. He explained that in the first couple of years of the Trust being formed, he is keen to recruit internally in order to maintain a stable personnel who have bought into the Trust's ethos; however, going forward, he believes the Trust should be more outward-looking and recruit from further afield. It was noted that the recruitment of a Headteacher for Oak View has been externally advertised as this is a specialist post. A discussion was</p>	



	<u>ACTION</u>
<p>held about Chigwell Row and it was noted that the Trust is looking at potentially having an Executive Headteacher or another model of leadership there. The substantive Headteacher vacancy at Ivy Chimneys will be advertised internally on Monday April 1st .</p> <p>A discussion was also held about the importance of encouraging Deputy Headteachers to apply for vacancies within the Trust.</p> <p>b) <u>Headship Guidance</u>: Mr Tidmarsh presented draft guidance on the Trust’s approach to Headship. The following guidance was discussed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For every school, where it is economically viable, to have its own Headteacher. 2. To keep disruption of the Leadership team to a minimum during the first 24/36 months of operation which may involve advertising more leadership posts internally during this period. 3. To use the model of Executive Headteacher* (running more than one school) and the model of Head of School* (day-to-day operational, no finance/strategy) where sensible on an interim or permanent basis. <p>* The titles to be determined as appropriate.</p> <p>Trustees asked: Q: What is the process for appointing an Executive Headteacher or Head of School? A: (CEO) We will advertise, but sometimes we will have to appoint due to circumstances.</p> <p>Trustees approved the guidance in principle, agreeing that it will be reviewed in two years’ time. The wording will be reviewed by the CEO, the Chair and Mrs Duffin and signed off at the next HR meeting in the summer term. It was agreed that the CEO will discuss this guidance on a regular basis with the Chair of the HR Committee, Mrs Duffin, and that it will be shared with the leadership team in the summer term.</p> <p>A discussion was held about the pay scales for Head of School and Executive Headteacher and it was agreed these need to be looked at by the HR Committee.</p> <p>c) <u>Teaching and Learning/2019 year 6 predictions</u>: Trustees noted each school’s year 6 predictions for summer 2019. It was noted that while the national average for reading/writing/maths combined for non-pupil premium children is 69.8%, the Trust schools are predicting an average of 72.8%. Trustees noted the schools which were predicting below the national average: Hillhouse and Theydon Bois.</p> <p>The current Headteacher predictions for the 100 pupil premium children within the Trust were also discussed: the predictions for 2019 are 53.7% which is significantly higher than the national figure of 49% and evidence that schools are working hard at closing the gap for disadvantaged pupils.</p> <p>In response to a query at the last meeting about the relationship between schools’ fluctuating data and the number of children who trigger PP funding, Mr Tidmarsh reported on two schools affected by this: Hereward, which has 20 Pupil Premium children, had a combined figure in</p>	<p>Headship guidance to be reviewed spring 2021</p> <p>CEO/Chair/Mrs Duffin to agree on precise wording; HR committee agenda summer term</p> <p>HR Committee to look into Exec HT/Head of School pay scales</p>



		<u>ACTION</u>
	<p>2018 of 70% compared to a predicted this year of 85%; and White Bridge, with 15 Pupil Premium children, had 60% combined in 2018 compared to a predicted figure of just 19% for this year.</p> <p>d) <u>2018/2019 Strategies</u>: Trustees noted the Trust’s strategies for this academic year. In term 6, the CEO will visit all the schools and request a report from each on what they have done differently this year to what they did last year and also on impact.</p> <p>e) <u>Year 2 schedule</u>: Mr Tidmarsh reported on the academic data collection schedule for the Trust’s second year. The Trust is buying into the MAT data booklet collated by ECC; Mr Woolard from Hereward is to collate a two-page summary.</p> <p>In January 2020, all year 6 children will sit standardised tests; they will sit another standardised test in mid-March. A review of the progress being made between January and March will be carried out as it has been noted that there is some accelerated progress made by a number of schools during this period; the methods behind this progress will be shared with other schools. Mr Tidmarsh reported that this system of monitoring progress during this period will possibly be cascaded to other year groups.</p> <p>f) <u>Non-academic data collection</u>: The CEO intends to collect a range of data from schools relating to the whole child: sports, attendance, clubs, a wellbeing survey and music participation.</p> <p>Trustees were pleased to note that this information is being collated as they agreed it would add value to the schools. However, they also requested that staff data is also collated in terms of attendance, CPD, pathways and emotional wellbeing. This will be discussed further at the July Board meeting.</p> <p>g) <u>Engagement/an update on the meeting between the CEO/Miss Wood and a marketing expert</u>: Mr Tidmarsh reported that he and Miss Wood met a marketing expert who works with a number of Trusts. However, it was decided that the marketing of the Trust in a formal way was expensive and not necessarily the best route to take. After discussion, it was agreed that Mr Tidmarsh will produce a seasonal update for parents which will be sent out by all the schools. He will also produce a press release at the start of the summer term to promote the school’s website.</p> <p>h) <u>Strategic Plan</u>: This had been discussed at committee level and will be presented to stakeholders at the AGM in April.</p>	<p>Staff data/wellbeing to be discussed at July Board meeting</p> <p>CEO to produce seasonal update for parents and a press release for summer term</p>
6	<p>To note receipt of the Minutes from the Finance and Audit Committee and HR Committee Trustees formally noted receipt of the Minutes from both the Finance and Audit Committee and the HR Committee.</p> <p><u>Matters arising</u></p> <p>a) <u>To formally approve the NJC Staff Pay Award for 2019/2020</u>: Trustees approved the NJC Staff Pay Award for 2019/2020 noting that the</p>	



		<u>ACTION</u>
	<p>award for 2020/2021 will be considered by the Finance and Audit Committee in the summer term.</p> <p>b) <u>To ratify the new banking arrangements as recommended by the Finance and Audit Committee</u>: A discussion was held about the new banking arrangements as detailed within the Finance and Audit Committee’s Minutes (19th March 2019). Trustees approved the recommendations and were pleased to note that these will also have a positive impact on Mrs Freeman’s workload, allowing her to work more strategically as CFO.</p> <p>c) <u>To review the MAT Budget summary 2018/2019</u>: Trustees noted the Budget summary for 2018/2019. They were pleased that there are no issues, although they were aware there may be some challenges during the year.</p> <p>Q: Are the CEO and the CFO addressing any specific issues?</p> <p>A: Yes, there is a comprehensive list and the CFO is addressing these in her strategic role. Mrs Freeman visits these schools at least once every half term.</p>	<p>Pay Award 20/21: Finance/Audit June agenda item</p>
7	<p>To review the MAT’s Risk Register</p> <p>The updated Risk Register for spring 2 had been circulated and the amber and red flags were discussed and noted. Trustees discussed how best to monitor these risks effectively and agreed that this will be discussed further at the July meeting. The CEO will liaise with other MATs to determine how they demonstrate their monitoring, while Trustees agreed to research how best to monitor this area. The CEO also confirmed he has given training to the Headteachers during their Leadership meetings on how to complete the registers accurately.</p>	<p>Risk monitoring to be discussed at July Board meeting</p>
8	<p>Trust Strategy</p> <p>a) <u>To discuss contingency planning within the Trust</u>: A detailed discussion was held about how the Trust would be lead effectively if the CEO and/or CFO were absent on a long-term basis. The following was agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>In the event of CEO absence</u>: The Trust currently has two LLEs (Local Leaders of Education) within its leadership team: Mr Furness and Mrs Noden. Mr Tidmarsh explained that both Headteachers would form the next tier of leadership in his absence. He added that a further five Headteachers are in the process of applying to be LLEs and, if successful, will become more actively involved in making some of the Trust-wide decisions. Trustees asked if this structure of management had been formalised; in response, the CEO reported that he will discuss this fully with the leadership team in the summer term. <u>In the event of CFO absence</u>: Mr Tidmarsh reported that Trust would be vulnerable should Mrs Freeman be absent long-term especially with regard to BACs payments. Trustees were reminded that Carly Ryan has been employed to carry out internal controls, staff training and reconciliation duties. A discussion was held about creating a number of Specialist Leaders of Education (SLEs) from within the MAT’s school business managers, but it was agreed that this suggestion needed more thought. Mr Tidmarsh agreed to look into the short-term emergency arrangements for some of the more key tasks. 	<p>Summer term: CEO to discuss management/leadership with HTs</p> <p>CEO to look into SLEs and emergency arrangements for key tasks</p>



		<u>ACTION</u>
	<p>b) To discuss the strategic deployment of Trust staff: This had been discussed in part under agenda item 5 in regard to Headship appointments. However, Trustees also discussed the strategic deployment elsewhere in the Trust, for example, with school business managers. A general discussion was held about a duplication of roles within the schools; Trustees acknowledged that they may have hard decisions to make going forward. It was also noted that there needs to be effective communication not only between school HR and finance staff, but also between Trustees who may be discussing the same matters at different committee meetings.</p>	
9	<p>Trust membership and appointments</p> <p>a) Trustees approved the appointment of Sarah Roffey as the Headteacher of High Beech Primary.</p> <p>b) Trustees approved the establishment of a Local Governing Body for High Beech Primary.</p> <p>c) Trustees approved the appointment of Jonathan Furness as the Headteacher of St John's Primary from 1st September 2019.</p>	
10	<p>MAT Governance</p> <p>a) Trustees approved the updated LGBs' composition and membership, including the membership and composition for High Beech Primary. Trustees queried the ongoing two vacancies for Trust Governors at Theydon Bois; Mr Tidmarsh agreed to raise this with Mr Rall.</p> <p>b) Trustees received and noted the Clerk's report from the LGBs' meetings. It was agreed that the CEO will work through the document with the Clerk to answer any queries. The Clerk will feed responses back to the LGBs.</p>	<p>CEO to discuss with Mr Rall the Trust vacancies at Theydon Bois</p> <p>Clerk/CEO to respond to LGBs queries</p>
11	<p>Policies</p> <p>a) Trustees approved the following policies, thanking members of the HR Committee in particular for all their hard work in reviewing the documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grievance Policy Discipline/Dismissal Procedure Capability Policy Financial Reserves Policy Write-Off and Disposal Policy Code of Conduct Policy Leave of Absence Policy Complaints Policy (amended version) Data Protection Policy 	



		<u>ACTION</u>
	The Clerk agreed to inform the Headteachers that the policies have been approved and that the up-to-date versions should appear on their websites if they are not signposting to the Trust website.	Clerk to let HTs know policies have been approved
12	<p>Trustee Visits</p> <p>a) <u>To discuss the Trustee visits to schools:</u> Trustees reported that they had been very pleased with the positive outcomes from their recent visits. They considered it a valuable exercise; they were particularly pleased that all schools visited showed evidence of the MAT's focus on closing the gap for disadvantaged pupils.</p> <p>A discussion was held about inviting Headteachers to the Board meetings in a year's time.</p> <p>b) Trustees noted the visits for the remainder of the year: 21st May 2019 2nd July 2019</p>	Summer 2020 agenda
13	<p>Clerk's Items</p> <p>a) <u>To discuss Trustee training:</u> The Clerk had previously circulated details of training opportunities for the Board. Mr Tidmarsh reported that the Trust has received a £2000 grant from the DfE to fund training. It was agreed that the CEO and the Chair will review the training and discuss it further at the July meeting. Trustees should review the information and send any preferences or comments to the Chair. At the previous meeting, the CEO had agreed to organise training on data for Trustees. However, he reported that he felt Trustees did not need help interpreting the MAT data booklet as he collates the information and presents an overview.</p> <p>b) <u>To confirm that all Trustees have completed their DBS checks:</u> The only outstanding DBS check is required by Mrs Rossetti. The Clerk will ensure this is carried out at the AGM in April.</p> <p>c) It was noted that the production of ID badges for Trustees is underway.</p> <p>d) It was agreed that the Scheme of Delegation will be reviewed in the autumn term by the LGBs.</p> <p>e) <u>To formally appoint a Trustee as Safeguarding Lead:</u> A discussion was held about the role of Trustee Safeguarding Lead. Following the meeting, Mrs Duffin volunteered to discuss the role fully with the CEO. In the meantime, the Chair's name will be placed on the Trust's Child Protection Policy.</p> <p>f) Mr Tidmarsh agreed to invite FaCSS Manager Jackie Scott to give a presentation to Trustees at the July Board meeting.</p>	<p>CEO/Chair to review training ops; July Board agenda item</p> <p>Mrs Rossetti to complete her DBS check at April AGM</p> <p>Review SoD autumn term</p> <p>CEO to ask FaCSS manager to present to summer Board meeting</p>



		<u>ACTION</u>															
<p>g) The Clerk reported that she had filed the Trust’s first Annual Return with Companies House.</p> <p>h) All Trustees checked and signed their initial declaration document.</p> <p>i) <u>Governance Website Compliance Audit</u>: The Clerk had decided to carry out an audit of all the schools’ websites to ensure the governance details were accurate. She was disappointed to report that only four of the 15 schools were compliant with Government requirements. She has emailed all the Headteachers to check their websites’ details and make the necessary amendments. She will check again and report back at the July meeting. The Clerk also agreed to check if the schools need to produce their own annual governance statements. She will report back.</p>		<p>Clerk to check if schools need annual governance statements</p>															
<p>14 To note the dates of future meetings for 2018/2019:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="3"><u>Summer Term</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>AGM</td> <td>Wednesday 24th April 2019 at Theydon Bois Primary</td> <td style="text-align: center;">6.00pm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>HR Committee</td> <td>Thursday 20th June 2019</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2.00pm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Finance and Audit Committee</td> <td>Thursday 27th June 2019</td> <td style="text-align: center;">7.00pm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Trust Board Meeting</td> <td>Wednesday 3rd July 2019</td> <td style="text-align: center;">6.45pm</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>b) Trustees approved the governance planner for 2019/2020.</p>		<u>Summer Term</u>			AGM	Wednesday 24 th April 2019 at Theydon Bois Primary	6.00pm	HR Committee	Thursday 20 th June 2019	2.00pm	Finance and Audit Committee	Thursday 27 th June 2019	7.00pm	Trust Board Meeting	Wednesday 3 rd July 2019	6.45pm	
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<p>15 AOB</p> <p>a) <u>Response to housing developments</u>: The Chair reported that the Epping Forest District Plan is in its final stage of appeal. He asked Trustees how they wished to respond to the building of new schools in the area, particularly that affecting Ivy Chimneys. It was agreed that the Trust will need to consider its response carefully. Trustees agreed to send their comments to the Chair.</p> <p>b) <u>Gender Pay Gap</u>: The CEO reported that the Trust is not required to submit analysis about the gender pay gap until March 2020. Trustees noted that the Gender Pay Gap report is only required when an employer has in excess of 250 employees on the 31 March on any given year and that it then has 12 months to provide the information. Due to the Trust’s conversion dates, the report will not have to be submitted this year.</p> <p>c) <u>Conference calls</u>: Trustees discussed the benefits of using conference calling if and when required.</p>		<p>Trustees to send their comments on the EFDP to the Chair</p>															



		<u>ACTION</u>
	d) Trustees sent Trustee Mr Wood their good wishes for his forthcoming marriage.	
	The meeting ended at 9.00pm.	