



Epping Forest Schools Partnership Trust

Held on Tuesday 4th December 2018 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 6.46pm.)

| | | <u>ACTION</u> |
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| 1 | Apologies (and reasons for absence); declarations of interest in agenda; plus declaration of Business Interests/Gifts and Hospitality There were no apologies for absence or declarations. | |
| 2 | AOB requests for an end-of-meeting consideration <u>FACSS</u> : At this point of the meeting, it was noted that the CEO will inform the Family and Children's Support Services hub of the information Trustees require regarding the impact of their work with the pupils. | CEO to liaise with FACSS regarding information required |
| 3 | To approve the Minutes of 10th October 2018 Trustees approved the Minutes of the meeting on 10 th October 2018 and these were signed by the Chair. | |



| | | <u>ACTION</u> |
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| | <p>Matters Arising (those which do not appear elsewhere on the agenda)</p> <p>a) <u>Agenda item 5</u>: The CEO confirmed he had circulated to Trustees the relevant log-in details for The Key.</p> | |
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| 4 | <p>To receive a briefing from the CEO</p> <p>Mr Tidmarsh gave a verbal presentation. The following, in particular, was noted:</p> <p>a) <u>Membership</u>: It was noted that High Beech Primary will join the MAT on 1st January 2019. A confidential discussion regarding Buckhurst Hill Community Primary School was held and this appears on pink attached to these Minutes.</p> <p>b) <u>Admissions</u>: Trustees ratified the Trust’s Admissions Policy for 2020/2021, noting that it was the standard policy from previous years; it had been formally approved by the Leadership Group of Headteachers. Mr Tidmarsh reported that he will be arranging a briefing in February 2019 for all employees who deal with admissions within the Trust.</p> <p>c) <u>Leadership Programme</u>: Mr Tidmarsh presented a spreadsheet detailing the different categories of teaching staff within the Trust. It was noted that some of the data provided by the Headteachers was not accurate and the CEO reported that he would need to ensure accuracy and consistency from the Leadership Group when this exercise is completed again.</p> <p>Trustees discussed the data and were interested to note that 25 teachers were formerly students from the SCITT. Mr Tidmarsh reported that, after analysing the data, the Trust has identified and started three training courses: one for NQTs; a three-module course for the RQTs (Recently Qualified Teachers); and a five-module Leading School Improvement course in conjunction with the University of East London. However, he explained that it will be unrealistic for the Trust to run courses for every category each year because of the schools’ capacity issues.</p> <p>d) <u>Engagement</u>: Mr Tidmarsh reported on the following: <u>TAs</u>: The CEO has met the Trust’s TAs during the behaviour training sessions at Oak View school. <u>All stakeholder groups</u>: The Headteachers have been asked to be aware of their schools’ chief stakeholders. <u>Community and Parents</u>: Miss Wood and the CEO are to meet with Alex Bigham, a marketing expert who deals with engagement of communities and parents within MATs.</p> <p>e) <u>Teacher accommodation</u>: It was noted that Mr Tidmarsh recently met with the Leader of the District Council, Chris Whitbread, to introduce the Trust and discuss where there may be opportunities for collaboration. As a result of these discussions, an invitation has been extended to the CEO to speak at a cabinet meeting. Key worker housing was also discussed at the meeting, although Rev Batson reported that the District Council does not have a key worker housing policy.</p> <p>f) <u>School Data</u>: Mr Tidmarsh reported that he will circulate the MAT data booklet which is 94 pages long. He added that Essex has produced a two-page data summary which is an external validation by the School Effectiveness Partner, Jacky Castle. A discussion</p> | <p>Miss Wood and CEO to meet marketing expert</p> <p>CEO to circulate data booklet</p> |



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| | <p>was held about how Trustees should be using this data; the CEO is to arrange external training to ensure Trustees use the information effectively.</p> <p>Trustees noted that the data has identified the key focus for 2018/2019: to close the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils in year 6. Mr Tidmarsh reported that all schools have provided him with their KS2 predictions for next summer and, while it appears there remains a gap between the two groups, it is closing slightly.</p> <p>Trustees noted and discussed the data which highlighted a number of schools whose attainment and progress data is fluctuating. Trustees asked: Q: Is there any relationship between these schools' fluctuating data and the number of children who trigger Pupil Premium funding? A: (CEO) I will look into this and report back. A: (Chair) It is worth noting that while these fluctuations have been flagged, they are not based on raw scores.</p> <p>g) <u>SCITT Inspection</u>: Mr Tidmarsh reported that the SCITT had just received its confidential draft inspection report. The judgment will remain confidential until the report is published in a few weeks' time. However, Trustees were delighted to note that the SCITT is very pleased with the provisional outcomes. Trustees congratulated the SCITT team for all their hard work and achievements.</p> | <p>CEO to arrange external training on data</p> <p>CEO to report back on correlation between fluctuating data and PP</p> |
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| 5 | <p>Compliance Audits <u>To review the schools' compliance audits</u>: Trustees were reminded that schools had been asked to complete three of the eight compliance modules on The Key: health and safety, safeguarding and the website. It was noted, for example, that the schools were 82% compliant in the health and safety audit, although this percentage is slightly skewed as one associate member school did not participate. Trustees asked: Q: What have schools gained from this exercise? A: (CEO) It has highlighted that there is a gap in the schools' paperwork; so, as a Trust, we will collate a central bank of documentation which schools require to ensure they are compliant.</p> <p>Mr Tidmarsh reported that the Headteachers have reacted positively to The Key's compliance tracker.</p> | |
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| 6 | <p>Finance Matters a) <u>An update on the MAT Budget 2018/2019</u>: Mrs Rossetti gave a verbal update of the 2018/2019 Budget and her written presentation is attached to these Minutes.</p> | |



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| <p>Trustees noted that there is an in-year deficit of £36,000. Mrs Rossetti explained that there was a balance carry forward of £680,000. Total revenue is £8,531,000 with expenditure of £8,567,000. The schools currently of concern and working towards a deficit recovery plan are: Oak View, which is currently in balance but, due to its funding complexity, is under review with a benchmarking exercise taking place; and Staples Road which is working with its Governors to remove its deficit.</p> <p>b) <u>To review and approve the Annual Report 2017/2018</u>: The Annual Report had been discussed in detail by the Finance and Audit Committee (see 28th November Minutes) and it was noted that this document is currently being reviewed by the CEO and Mrs Freeman. Trustees were asked to send any comments to the CEO by Friday 14th December. Trustees approved the Annual Report, subject to the CEO and CFO agreeing the final report.</p> <p>c) <u>To receive and approve the Financial Statements for 2017/2018</u>: Mrs Rossetti reported on the key points from the Financial Statements for 2017/2018 (these also feature in the Finance and Audit Committee Minutes from 28th November). Trustees noted that one of the biggest risks to the Trust is the actuarial valuation of two pension schemes and the potential liability that these valuations could increase next year.</p> <p>Trustees formally approved the Financial Statements for 2017/2018 which need to be filed with the ESFA by December 31st 2018 and with Companies House by May 31st 2019.</p> <p>d) <u>To discuss and respond to the Auditors' Management Letter</u>: Mrs Rossetti was pleased to report that the auditors believed the recent audit had been a very good outcome for the Trust. The key message was that the Trust needs to focus on its bank reconciliation controls and on an internal scrutiny review especially for all medium and high issues identified (there were 7 low issues identified, 8 medium and three high). Trustees noted that this had been discussed in detail at the recent Finance and Audit Committee meeting.</p> <p><u>Next steps</u>: The CFO will respond on the Trust's behalf and all actions will need to be achieved by the next audit.</p> <p>e) <u>To receive the formal report from the DfE's financial check</u>: Mrs Rossetti gave a verbal report on the recent EFSA's audit on the Trust's Financial Management and Governance Self-assessment Return (full details appear in the Finance and Audit Committee's Minutes from 28th November). It was noted that the CFO will have to respond to the EFSA by December 19th; the ESFA will contact the Trust on January 21st 2019 to confirm the relevant recommendations have been addressed. Mrs Rossetti reported that one recommendation is to ensure that schools have raised awareness of related party transactions and 'at cost' policies. From April 2019, any transactions over £20,000 have to go to the Secretary of state for approval. Any transactions under £20,000 must be transparent. Mrs Freeman will update the Financial Regulations to reflect the changes. The key message was to avoid transactions with related parties if possible.</p> | <p>Comments on Annual Report to go to CEO by 14/12/18</p> <p>CFO to file financial statements with EFSA by 31/12/18 and at Companies house by 31/05/19</p> <p>CFO to respond to Management Letter</p> <p>CFO to respond to EFSA by 19/12</p> <p>CFO to update Financial Regulations</p> |
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| 7 | <p>To note receipt of the Minutes from the Finance and Audit Committee Trustees formally noted receipt of the Finance and Audit Committee Minutes from 28th November 2018.</p> | |
| 8 | <p>MAT Governance</p> <p>a) <u>To approve the LGBs composition and membership</u>: Trustees formally approved the LGBs' composition and membership, noting that two schools (Oak View and Theydon Bois) had a composition number larger than stipulated in the LGB Terms of Reference. However, it was acknowledged that Theydon Bois is working to reduce its membership. Trustees also noted that Epping Upland is looking to extend its membership from 8 to 11 Governors; it was noted that the LGB must ensure that 25% of its Governors are church appointees when it grows in 2019.</p> <p>b) <u>To receive and note the Clerk's reports from the LGBs' meetings since conversion</u>: These reports had been previously circulated and were noted. It was agreed that the Clerk and the CEO will go through the reports and answer any queries the schools may have.</p> <p>The Clerk expressed frustration at the four schools which had sent their Minutes to her very late; this meant any comments or key issues were not included in her reports. A discussion was held about the schools that are choosing not to work with the governance planner. Rev Batson agreed to send a letter in January to all Chairs of Governors to thank them for their hard work and also acknowledge the issues schools have faced with regards to finance; he will also inform them that from summer term 2019, all deadlines regarding Minutes and policies must be met otherwise any queries and comments received late will go unanswered.</p> <p>Trustees expressed concern about the CFO's workload; Mr Tidmarsh reported that a new finance officer has been appointed and that Mrs Freeman has also received support from Haslers.</p> | <p>CEO and Clerk to go through LGB reports</p> <p>Rev Batson to write to all Chairs of Governors: January 2019</p> |
| 9 | <p>Joint Consultative Committee</p> <p>a) <u>To receive a verbal report on the workings of the JCC from the CEO</u>: Mr Tidmarsh reported that the JCC meets once a term. The initial meeting was held in October and local and regional union reps attended, along with two national reps. The next meeting is in February.</p> <p>b) Trustees approved the revised Trade Union Information, Consultation and Facilities Agreement.</p> <p>c) Trustees approved the revised JCC Terms of Reference. Mr Tidmarsh reported on the £1 per pupil which the Trust pays the unions via the LA for facilities time (this covers a number of things such as jury service, the reps' time out of their schools etc). He explained that Mrs Freeman has tried to pay this fee, but has been unsuccessful owing to the relevant person at Essex not being available to receive it. The funds remain in the Trust accounts.</p> | |



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| 10 | <p>To review the MAT's Risk Register A discussion was held about the Trust's Risk Register which had been collated by the CEO from all the schools' individual risk plans. Trustees noted that the Headteachers need some training on how to complete and interpret the registers satisfactorily; the CEO agreed to organise relevant training. The CEO highlighted the amber and red flags and agreed that if a school flags an issue as red, then this should also appear as red on the Trust's register. Trustees suggested that there should be a mitigation plan in place for tracking. It was agreed that there needs to be further consideration on how the Trust records the risk assessments. However, the existing model will be kept for the time being.</p> | <p>CEO to organise training for HTs</p> |
| 11 | <p>Personnel Matters Trustees appointed formally the substantive Headteachers of St John's Primary and Alderton Junior: Chris Jarman and Kirsty Johnson.</p> | |
| 12 | <p>Policies a) Trustees approved the following policies, noting the comments from the LGBs: Gifts and Hospitality Procurement Anti-Fraud, Corruption and Bribery Pay Policy (revised following LGB comments) Whistleblowing</p> <p>It was agreed generally that if a committee does not meet in the half term when the policies are to be reviewed, then the CEO and the Committee Chairs will meet to discuss them. Mr Tidmarsh also agreed to produce a policy process flow chart.</p> <p>b) The following policies, which had been sent for review to the LGBs, had not been discussed in depth by the Trustees; it was agreed that these will be reviewed and approved by the HR Committee meeting in January: Accident/Incident Reporting and Investigation Procedure Sickness Management Performance Management</p> <p>c) Trustees agreed to review the following policies in the first half of the spring term: Consultancy Grievance</p> | <p>CEO to produce a policy process flow chart</p> <p>HR Committee to review policies in January 2019</p> |



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| | Discipline Capability Capital and Reserves Policy (addendum to Financial Regulations) Investment Policy Disposal and Write-Off of Stock Assets Policy Competitive Tendering | |
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| 13 | Trust website Trustees noted that the Trust website is still a work in progress. | |
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| 14 | To discuss the Trustee visits to schools It was noted that three Trustees (Rev Batson, Mrs Sunderland and Mrs Duffin) visited Theydon Bois Primary, Oak View and Hill House on December 4 th prior to the meeting. It was agreed that there will be a wider discussion about these visits at the next Board meeting. It was also suggested that the CEO invites the Headteacher at Oak View to a future meeting of the Board. The next planned school visits are: 15 th January 2019 28 th March 2019 21 st May 2019 2 nd July 2019 Rev Batson asked Trustees to let him know of their availability for the January visit. | March Board meeting agenda CEO to invite HT at Oak View to Board meeting Trustees to let Chair know of availability for January 2019 |
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| 15 | To discuss general Governor training within the MAT Mr Tidmarsh reported that the Teaching School is arranging training for the LGBs with a national leader of governance. He added that he is also trying to arrange Trustee training and that this will be funded by the DfE. He will keep Trustees updated. | March agenda item |
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| 16 | Clerk's Items a) It was agreed that Trust schools will follow the Essex term dates for 2019/2010. | |



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| | <p>b) To approve any Trust-wide non-pupil days for 2019/2010: A robust discussion was held about non-pupil days. Mr Tidmarsh suggested that there are two Trust-wide non-pupil days for 2019/2020: one on October 25th 2019 for training; and the second to be designated as a 'wellbeing' day for staff. This would mean the schools would have six non-pupil days for 2019/2020. One Trustee voiced their discomfort at going against the Government's stipulation of a maximum five non-pupil days.</p> <p>After discussion and a vote, Trustees approved the two academy days. The Chair and CEO will decide on a title for the 'wellbeing' day.</p> <p>Trustees asked: Q: If a school wanted to have another non-pupil day because they needed it for specific training, for example, would the LGB be able to approve this or should it be the Trust? A: (CEO) The school should check with me first.</p> | <p>CEO and Chair to decide on title for 'wellbeing' academy day</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 17 | <p>To note the dates of future meetings for 2018/2019:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="3"><u>Spring Term</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>HR Committee Meeting</td> <td>Tuesday 22nd January 2019</td> <td>2.00pm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Annual General Meeting **</td> <td>Wednesday 23rd January 2019</td> <td>4.00pm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>HR Committee</td> <td>Wednesday 13th March 2019</td> <td>2.00pm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Finance and Audit Committee</td> <td>Tuesday 19th March 2019</td> <td>7.00pm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Trust Board Meeting</td> <td>Thursday 28th March 2019</td> <td>6.45pm</td> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="3"><u>Summer Term</u></th> </tr> <tr> <td>HR Committee</td> <td>Thursday 20th June 2019</td> <td>2.00pm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Finance and Audit Committee</td> <td>Thursday 27th June 2019</td> <td>7.00pm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Trust Board Meeting</td> <td>Wednesday 3rd July 2019</td> <td>6.45pm</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>** It was noted that the AGM will be held in St John's Church in Epping. The Trust intends to invite stakeholders to the meeting, although clarification on this is being sought by the CEO and Clerk.</p> | <u>Spring Term</u> | | | HR Committee Meeting | Tuesday 22 nd January 2019 | 2.00pm | Annual General Meeting ** | Wednesday 23 rd January 2019 | 4.00pm | HR Committee | Wednesday 13 th March 2019 | 2.00pm | Finance and Audit Committee | Tuesday 19 th March 2019 | 7.00pm | Trust Board Meeting | Thursday 28 th March 2019 | 6.45pm | <u>Summer Term</u> | | | 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 | <p>CEO/Clerk to clarify invitees to the AGM</p> |
| <u>Spring Term</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| 18 | <p>AOB: There was none.</p> <p>The meeting ended at 9.05pm.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |