

PICKWICK ACADEMY TRUST
TRUSTEES AND MEMBERS MEETING

HELD AT CORSHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL ON 12 JUNE 2018 AT 6.30PM

M I N U T E S

PRESENT

TRUSTEES

Fiona Allen (CEO)
Rob Hayday (Chair)
David Willis
Andrew Hall
Keith Hillman (FD)
Dave Powell
Sheila Copeman
Paul Vincent
Rob Ward
Gill Clark

IN ATTENDANCE

OTHERS

Gina Cooke HT
Julia Hawkins HT
James Passmore PLTSA

Janet Livingstone (clerk)

WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Rob Ward (vice Chair) opened the meeting at 6.40pm.
Matthew Nightingale and Chris Canning (HTs) were absent
Members did not attend the meeting.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Trustees had no changes to their business interests and no conflicts of interest with items on the agenda of the Pickwick Academy Trust.

Ian Fewtrell addressed the meeting and confirmed that the Members would not be attending the meeting tonight but would be interviewing each Trustee, as their initial one year period in office was ending. He said that re-appointments would be made over 1, 2 and 3 years to ensure good succession planning and overall knowledge base within the Board. New experience would be introduced when and where appropriate. Following the interviews each Trustee will be informed of the result in due course.

Gill Park a potential new Trustee was interviewed first.

ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

1. BOARD MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2018 were agreed as a true and accurate record and accepted by all trustees. The minutes were signed by RH at the end of the meeting.

2. BOARD MATTERS ARISING

2.1 Health and Safety Policy – completed

FA confirmed that all documentation had now been gathered together. All four schools currently buy into the Wiltshire Health and Safety portal which provides all up to date policies and procedures. A Health and Safety Audit undertaken By Wiltshire LA was underway and at various stages in the schools and all reports would come to the Board for scrutiny.

RH joined the meeting

RH stated that it was important that all the policies in the four schools were harmonised as soon as possible.

FA asked the Board to accept the Health and Safety Policy on the understanding that it is a Work in Progress document and will be developed over time. PV seconded and all the Trustees agreed.

2.2 Year 2 Budget Plan

See Finance Report –Work will continue to produce the forecast budgets required by the ESFA with input from the schools.

FINANCE

3. Finance Report

The Finance report covered the Internal Assurance Report, 2017-2018 Budget Management Reports and Budget Monitoring Statements

The reserve statement shows the position for each school and overall for the PAT. The projected balance at 31 August 2018 for PAT is estimated at 251, 367 (includes restricted and unrestricted funds). The position for Aloeric is different to the other schools in that restricted funds received this year (PP, sports grant and capital) will not be fully spent. This results in a deficit of £22K in the unrestricted/general reserve.

MN was not at the meeting so was unable to update the Board on the recovery plan for Aloeric. It seems that Aloeric has an in year surplus, while the other three schools are predicting deficits. For CPS, IL and QC the summary statements show that expenditure this year is being supported by brought forward reserves.

There is a projected overspend of £7K for PAT central support costs as a result of additional CEO/FD and SBM work to consolidate Trust operation.

The next Board meeting will receive 2018/2019 budget proposals from each school. FA highlighted that extra costs such as pay increases and increased pensions contributions would mean that school budget allocations were cut in real terms.

KH asked the Board to note the report.

7.10pm IF introduced Gill Clark to the Board as a new Trustee appointed by the Members.

4. Financial Administration Review plus delegated responsibilities – TRUST RESTRUCTURING

FA provided the background and work done to date:

- The new structure had received a positive, but cautious welcome at all four schools
 - Two interim Heads of School had been appointed to take up their position 1 September until 31 December 2018
 - HR Consultant (Lisa Poole) consulted staff regarding permanent Heads of School positions
 - Geraldine Tidy (SIP) will act as Education Adviser to appointment panel
 - Recruitment packs written
 - Administrative review now underway with meetings set for 12 June for all four admin teams
- FA provided the staffing proposals and proposed structure, together with a pay protection document. It set out how the proposals would affect each school. The cost of the new structure exceeds existing costs by £16,700. The restructuring will involve consultation with staff.

The central structure will be based on one site on a trial basis for an initial period of one year, and staff will be seconded in the new roles. The deadline for comments on the proposals is 29th June, then approval from the Trust Board chair would be sought by Friday 6 July following any necessary adjustments. As the Chair will be on holiday at the end of the consultation, The Vice Chair will be asked for approval.

Seven current posts would be re-purposed as of 1 September 2018. It was hoped that, although there was a risk of redundancy, this would be an opportunity for key players to progress their careers in alternative roles. It was however thought likely that protected pay procedures might have to be invoked.

Pay Protection – FA and KH had put forward a paper proposing salary protection for a period of 5 years from 1 September 2019 (Wiltshire LA uses a system for pay protection for one year, over one grade).

Discussion ensued regarding the rationale and length of time that this protection was in place with regard to: being a good employer, financial resources, staff performance and the effect on other employees within the structure, and setting a precedent... A compromise solution was reached.

For this restructuring the following is proposed:

As a result of service redesign, employees may be deployed to a role which is two grades lower than their current role. Incremental progression and any negotiated pay award will be applicable during the period of salary protection. Salary protection will be applied for a period of 2 years from 1 September 2019.

RH proposed the above paragraph and DP seconded. All Trustees present agreed to the proposal. (DW did not vote as he was not in the meeting for this matter)

7.25pm GC joins meeting

5. Internal Assurance Report

This report was on GovernorHub and related to the second visit from Bishop Fleming in April which reviewed recommendations from the initial visit and looked at bank accounts, petty cash, expenditure controls, credit cards and fixed assets. The majority of agreed actions have been carried out. RH stated that the information should be shared with LGBs so that local leaders could support the improvements required. KH reported that GC had reassured him that the two red coded recommendations relating to Corsham Primary School were being addressed. The next internal assurance visit will take place in July.

KH asked for suggestions on what should be covered in the Bishop Fleming report next year.

RH highlighted the need to test the new mechanism following the administrative and financial restructuring to ensure consistency of approach in the hubs.

AH stated that a tight focus on the monthly internal reporting was essential so that problems could be highlighted at an early stage.

6 DfE Loss of Trust's Funding Agreement

The DfE, having lost the Trust's Funding Agreement submitted at the initiation of PAT in 2017, have suggested that the PAT sign a Deed of Confirmation which corroborates the Trust had been established and agreed by the DfE and Secretary of State for Education. FA recommends that this document is checked by a solicitor (Winckworth Sherwood) at a cost of £500. The risks are very high for the Trust if the Deed of Confirmation is in any way incorrect as there is no Funding Agreement to refer back to.

RH proposed that the Board employ a solicitor to check the Deed of Confirmation as suggested by FA. DP seconded and all Trustees agreed.

7. Risk Management Update

The PAT risk register and all four schools risk registers are up to date and being constantly reviewed. QC are sharing theirs with the LGB in the July meeting, and this should become regular procedure. It was thought prudent for GC and JH to ensure that the new Heads of School at Aloeric and Ivy Lane were provided with familiarisation to ensure that this document was put to full working use in these schools.

RH leaves the meeting and RW takes over as Chair

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8. Headteacher Reports

No questions had been received in advance of the meeting.

DP stated that he liked the format of the report. He commented on the number of exclusions at Aloeric.

GP felt that percentages were more helpful than colour coding. JH explained that she was looking into standardising assessments so that more fruitful comparisons could be made. A common assessment and output scheme was being discussed next Tuesday. Geraldine Tidy had stressed the importance also of a commonality of approach through scrutiny of books.

DW is reviewing the HT document with a view to improving the reporting to the Board and defining a system transportable to new schools

RH returns to Chair the meeting

9. Trust SATs Monitoring Visit

FA commissioned Geraldine Tidy (SIA) to make unannounced visits to the four founding schools to check SAT administration and to write a report for Trustees to ensure that all statutory obligations are being adhered to. The report is on GovernorHub. A concern was expressed by one school with regard to the unannounced visit, however FA feels it is the duty of the Board to show rigour and ensure statutory processes are carried out in line with national standards and it will provide a benchmark for robust preparations in the future.

In 2019 the Executive Heads will train the new Heads of School on the robust preparation that needs to be in place as standard.

10. Updated School Improvement Section – cost implications

Following discussions, the four founding Heads felt that the original School Improvement section of the Business Plan was not valid and deadlines and expectations outlined in it had not been met. So GC and JH had developed a new School Improvement Action Plan which will be delivered in the new academic year by the Executive Heads. The focus has been narrowed to:

- Assessment aim to agree a common approach
- Promote collaboration between schools
- Self evaluation
- School improvement – bid applications
- Quality of teaching and learning
- Welfare – collective improvements

RH asked when the Board would get updates on actions planned and CG and JH planned to report back.

9pm IF thanked the Trustees and stated that the Members had found the interviews constructive. Outcomes would be disseminated in approximately 10 days. Some further research was required. The Members left.

TEACHING SCHOOL

11 Update on new SIG initiative and PLTSA Action Plan 2018-2019

JP gave a brief update to the Board.

Four SIGs had been set up and the 55 member schools had been invited to join. Four leaders had been recruited and member schools had committed themselves to a minimum number of sessions.

The Salisbury Hub is fully operational and engaging schools in the area, hitting all eligibility criteria to apply for teaching school status. It is keen to keep the link with PLTSA.

PLTSA is ready to deliver Schools Direct through the SCITT partnership from September 2018.

PLTSA is investigating different ways of bringing money in and generating surpluses, such as developing phonics programmes and increasing the numbers of Schools Direct trainees. It is refocussing on staying as a centre of excellence.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND BEING A GOOD EMPLOYER

12. Update on appointment of two new Heads – TRUST RESTRUCTURING

FA updated the Board. Packs had been sent out and there had been a trickle of interest. Candidates were being encouraged to look around both schools. It was hoped to shortlist 6 candidates for both vacancies.

GOVERNANCE

13 Review of the first joint LGB meeting

RH thought it was a useful meeting and had engaged the wider stakeholders. He complimented FA on her magnificent presentation, which left everyone in no doubt that PAT was putting children first. FA aimed to make it an annual event.

14. Trust Away Day

It was decided to hold a Trust Review Meeting in September 2018. This would aim to review the Business Plan and Action Plan.

LEADERSHIP

n/a

POLICIES FOR APPROVAL

13. The Policy Panel has approved:

- Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace
- Disciplinary
- Support Staff Performance
- Related party transaction
- Equal opportunities for staff
- Flexible working
- Non-smoking
- Dress code
- Staff code of conduct

RH reported back from the Policy Panel. There had been no material issues, and a couple of the policies had been double checked with HR.

RH proposed the above policies which had been approved by the panel. RW seconded and all trustees agreed.

RH asked that the thanks of the Board be passed to Emma Preater and Amanda Bunker for all their hard work during the year on finance matters.

ACTION CEO

SC queried whether Board members should have official emails. CH was looking into this currently. RH requested that their current absence be added to the PAT risk register.
ACTION CEO

NEXT BOARD MEETING:

TUESDAY 10 JULY AT 6.30PM AT Ivy Lane School

The meeting closed at 9.25 pm

Signed:

Date: