

PICKWICK ACADEMY TRUST
TRUSTEES AND MEMBERS MEETING

HELD AT CORSHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL ON 18 SEPTEMBER 2018 AT 6.00PM

M I N U T E S

PRESENT TRUSTEES	IN ATTENDANCE MEMBERS	OTHERS
Fiona Allen (CEO)	Paul Dimech	James Passmore
Rob Hayday (Chair)	Elspeth Griffiths	Julia Hawkins
David Willis	Ian Fewtrell	Gina Cooke
Paul Vincent	Gail Chilcott	
Keith Hillman (FD)		
Andrew Hall		
Gill Clark		
Rob Ward		
Sheila Copeman		Janet Livingstone (clerk)

WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair opened the meeting at 6.00pm.

David Powell (Trustee) and Alexandra Bond (Member) were absent.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

SUCCESSSES

- Formation of PAT and its establishment through year one to create growth opportunities in year two
- Retention of strong team at Board level
- Appointment of two excellent Heads of School
- New Leadership Team in place with regular meetings planned
- The issue of Trustee reviews and appointment has been resolved
- Overcoming difficult challenges has provided renewed strength to move forward as a team
- The formation of one entity from four separate schools
- Collaboration on policies, expertise and strengths across the member schools is happening
- Moving from aspiration to understanding the reality of the challenges and change
- The new admin structure has been set up
- The Board's requirements for monitoring in HT reports, KPIs etc is better understood
- The Board is in a stronger position to understand the strengths in each school resulting in being able to work strategically to achieve the vision of PAT
- PAT now aligned to the Teaching School – a strong bond is evident
- Significant work done on the marketing packs to attract new schools providing growth opportunities
- A Trust Designated Safeguarding Lead has been appointed
- LGB Chairs, Finance, meetings now established
- Staff are meeting together to share expertise for example the SENCos
- Pupils involved in events across the schools
- The Trust Website up and running
- Contracts Register are in place ready for schools to use
- GDPR implemented
- Joint LGB annual meetings was held – positive feedback was received

- Articulation of Pickwick's vision and values to RSC. RH articulated the RSC requirement for Exec HT attendance at the Board to be reviewed but confirmed his support for the continuation of this arrangement to ensure effective Board decision making, transparency and communication.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT AS A BOARD

- Constitution exists for use
- Scheme of Delegation exists for use
- Open and honest dialogue from the start
- Learning to ask the most appropriate questions
- Ability to discuss as a collective
- Larger task than envisaged, but learnt from all the challenges and need to move forward

CHALLENGES

- Need to improve communication with ALL staff to enable full engagement with the PAT (JP is producing a monthly update for Governors; joint Conference on February 25th for all staff)
- Website development required to ensure staff can use it as a communication tool
- Behaviours – there was a challenge to authority/disharmony at the beginning which had an impact on time resources and emotional energy. Full operational capacity is required moving forward without distraction.
Need to dispel the Corsham-centric view and deal decisively with any friction
- The reality of being part of the MAT is not fully functioning yet across the schools. Trust Board need to go into schools to make themselves known to set tone and support direction. Successes across the schools should be shared.
- A decision needs to be made on how far to take commonality. Schools are not autonomous and should retain a unique identity while sharing good practice and performing.

WHAT HAS BEEN COMPLETED SINCE JULY 2018

- Senior Leadership Model for the future
- Support Model for the future
- Recruitment of two Heads of School

FUTURE PLANS

- Revise staffing structure and standardise staffing models across the schools to address this high area of expenditure and our education offer to children
- School Improvement work
- Optimise Central Admin Team
- Contracts work – looking initially at cleaning then catering
- Secure partner schools
- Recruit replacement CEO and FD

WORRIES AND CONCERNS

- Growth
- Overall financial position of the Trust
- Central Budget – time required
- Issues arising in one of the Trust schools
- Building work bids at Aloeric and Ivy Lane, plus work at CPS

- Embedding school improvement as an area of focus while addressing operational issues
- Remembering that the children at the core of the organisation!

FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE TRUST

KH gave a breakdown of the situation:

- Board approved budgets in July.
- Expenditure exceeded income and reserves being used up too quickly.
- Each LGB is to look at their finances and produce a recovery plan by November.
- No growth is a non-viable position.
- 5% efficiency savings are required.
- January 2019 – plan for Staffing operational delivery model across the schools.
- A target model could be provided to LGBs with costings.

Solutions:

- No additional changes in staff from now on unless approved by KH/CEO
- Board steer central approach and present to LGBs
- Standardise how budget is monitored
- Board awareness of the workforce organisation, cost per pupil and return on investment
- Staffing model of each to Keith by 12 October
- Jenny (Aloeric Finance Chair) to support Aloeric and join focus group to look at finances

CENTRAL TEAM BUDGET

- Time required to embed changes, supporting schools.
- KH/CEO – financial impact – allocated 1.5 days per week currently – will need more time

Solutions

- CEO and KH should submit a salary request to the Board. KH/CEO will consider this.

GROWTH

- No growth = no future for the Trust
- Current political situation with regard to MATs was explained by CEO. The message is now very different to a year ago. There is a conflict in relationships between Ofsted and the DfE. RSC power is declining, grants are reduced for conversion and there is no requirement for every school to be part of a MAT by 2020. So schools will now need to be persuaded to join a MAT.

Solutions

- Clarify to joining schools the benefits for joining – continuing improvement of pack
- JP explained the possibility of attracting Church Schools. Both the Salisbury and Bath & Wells Dioceses could support schools joining our MAT. The link with the Salisbury Hub is beneficial. 17 schools in Salisbury are linked with the Teaching School. There would be a requirement to have a Diocesan representation on the Board, but this could be one of the current members if they fulfilled the requirements. Any school wishing to join may require reconfiguration of the existing Trust Board to allow representation and this might need to be considered as PAT future relies on growth.
- Possibility of administering the Church Schools in a different way and for them to be Associate Members of the MAT rather than full members.
- FA/JP are visiting a school in Timsbury with other schools in Devizes and Swindon also being interested.

CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES – SEE SEPARATE MINUTES

NEXT BOARD MEETING: TUESDAY 2 OCTOBER AT 6.30 AT ALOERIC

The meeting closed at 9.07pm

Signed:

Date: