

Directors Meeting Minutes 5th February 2016 8am

Attendees : Mr P Lovern (PL) (Executive Head), Mrs H Bowman (HB) (Chair of Directors),
Mrs S Cockayne (SC) (Director), Mr P Halifax (PH) (Vice Chair of Directors), Mrs C Humphries (CH) (Director),
Mrs L Brown (LB) (Business Manager)
Mrs E Bowring (EB) (SENCO) attended to present Item 4 on Agenda.
Clerk to Directors: Mrs A Howard (AH)

RC: Richard Crosse
SM: St Mary's
HP: Howard Primary
TA: Teaching Assistant
PTA: Parent Teacher Association
EHT: Executive Headteacher
NQT: Newly qualified teacher
SPAG: Spelling, punctuation and grammar
LAG: Local Advisory Group
PCC: Parochial Church Council
PC: Parish Council
KPI: Key Performance Indicator

1. **Prayer** - Pl started the meeting with a prayer.
2. **Apologies** - Mrs M Havelock-Crozier (MHC) (Director), Mrs J Smith (JS) (Director), Mr G Wood (GW) (Director)
3. **Pecuniary Interest** - LB informed Directors that quotations for remedial water works had been sought from three companies, including one for which LB's brother was a Director; quotations would be sent directly to PL for consideration and details shared with Directors. There were no changes to the Pecuniary Interest Register.
4. **Dyslexia Friendly Update** - EB informed Directors that on 23rd and 24th February verification of dyslexia friendly status would be taking place across the MAT. On Tuesday 23rd full verification of HP will take place and on Wednesday 24th reverification at SM and RC will take place. The verification process is undertaken by the British Dyslexia Association to ensure that good practice occurs across the three schools, with appropriate diagnosis and intervention strategies, interactive displays in place and reasonable adjustments of resources. EB said that staff had worked hard to produce displays including names, questions and appropriate signage. She has produced a ticklist for teachers to incorporate the important points of being dyslexia friendly in their teaching; there may still be development points to work on, including the highlighting of using visual, audio and kinaesthetic teaching in their lesson plans. Children are given buff paper if this makes reading easier by reducing the print contrast. HB asked what Directors could do to help and was told that MHC will be supporting the process: on Tuesday MHC will meet with the assessors at HP who will then walk round the school and interview parents, staff and children. They will also be looking at books, the environment and reporting procedures. As the three schools follow the same policies and procedures, EB has asked that they be considered as one when looking at this. The assessors will then spend half the morning at SM and half at RC, carrying out spot checks.

EB pointed out to Directors that the SEN Academy resources are on the shared drive and this has made it a lot easier to share resources. TAs have worked hard with interventions, assessments taking place pre- and post-intervention to measure the effectiveness. Training has also taken place. PH asked whether EB thought all pupils should be screened for dyslexia, so that strategies can be put in place earlier; however EB considered that strategies are in place from the start for all children who have difficulties. PL advised that there was no additional funding available if a diagnosis of dyslexia is made and informed Directors of the dire funding situation for special needs children; there is a backlog of cases for Educational Psychologists to look at, funding for behaviour issues has gone and NHS funding for a pupil at HP was withdrawn with only a week's notice. The £6000 paid to schools is to fund all the pupils with special needs.

With prospects of budget reductions, PL thought that TAs were now needed for intervention sessions in the afternoons and would not be available for general TA support in the classroom; it would be necessary to review TA contracts in the light of this.

CH asked about the culture within the classroom regarding children with special needs including dyslexia and EB was of the opinion that children now are more open with each other, and are more aware and tolerant of children with special needs. With the increase in intervention sessions, for a range of different reasons, children are more accepting of this. Strategies such as 1 Minute Reader, Reciprocal Reading and Fast Forward are used on a one-to-one basis, but intervention mostly takes place in small groups. PH considered that there had been a marked improvement in the culture around special needs since EB had taken up her post. EB has now passed her National SENCO Award and was congratulated on this. It is planned that there will be a smooth hand-over of the SENCO role when EB takes maternity leave.

5. **Minutes of last meeting -**

a) **Actions taken:** HB has met with the parent at SM. PL now has a named contact at Cameron Homes but has not met with him yet. However he has spoken to Paul Wilkes who does not wish to be involved in a building project but has indicated that the foundations are strong enough for another storey on top of the classrooms. PL has mentioned the wish to increase the number of classrooms to the PTA who were very much in support; he will also discuss this with the Trustees with a view to obtaining matched funding with CIF (Condition Improvement Funding) money. PH understands that the Cricket Club issue has been discussed with the Parish Council.

b) **Items to carry forward:** Headteacher's Performance Management Review is to take place this afternoon (5.2.16) and HB will report back to the next meeting. With regards to the quotes for IT, LB is still awaiting a quote from Entrust. New batteries have been ordered for the laptops, but new laptops for teachers and laptops or iPads for children are still needed. LB said that a new iPad trolley is on order.

c) **Approval and signing of minutes:** These were agreed as a true record and signed.

6. **Safeguarding Update** - PL reported that all designated and deputy designated safeguarding officers have now been trained to L2 and above. There has been a staff training session for the MAT on safeguarding, including sexting, sexploitation, Prevent; there will be Safer Internet Day on 9 February. PL plans to hold a safeguarding information session once a term, with twilight training for Directors and volunteers.

7. **Policies and Procedures** –

a) **Safeguarding Policy:** HB pointed out that although the Safeguarding Policy was good, it was full of acronyms and she asked LB to ensure that these are written out in full in the policy, together with a list of acronyms and a glossary at the end of the policy, to make the Policy a more user-friendly document. LB said further changes to the policy are expected. PH queried the use of the term 'governing body' and LB confirmed that this would be changed to Board of Directors in all the policies. The policy was accepted by Directors.

CH asked how it was intended to ensure clear communication between the Lead Safeguarding Officer and Designated/Deputy Safeguarding Officers. After discussion it was agreed that there should be an extra paragraph to state clearly that the Lead Officer should be consulted before any

referral takes place. CH will give LB a useful form which goes through the different stages to complete, in the case of allegations against members of staff. HB asked whether children involved in Safeguarding incidents are identified in some way in records and LB confirmed that a highlighted mark is added to the pupil's main file to identify that there is a separate safeguarding file. CH asked whether Heads of School should be given training in Safer Recruitment, but PL said their focus was on Teaching and Learning and the day-to-day running of the schools, rather than in recruitment of staff.

b) **Prevent Policy:** This was accepted by Directors.

c) **PE Policy:** It was agreed that the acronyms should be explained. The policy was accepted by Directors.

d) **Directors Code of Conduct:** This was approved by Directors having been sent to all prior to the meeting. It was agreed that Directors should not have the right to walk into and around school without permission from PL.

8. Finance -

a) **Auditors Update:** Auditors have now been appointed: Moore Stephens, who impressed by emphasising the importance of the reputation of the Academy.

b) **Cash Flow/Management Accounts:** GW as the Director with responsibility for Finance and LB will be spending time together on a regular basis having already met in January and further meetings booked for March, April and May. However LB highlighted that it is important that Directors identify what GW should be looking at, e.g. risks (LB referred Directors to the risk policy/register that she had uploaded to the MAT Intranet Directors pages) and what is important for the Trust in terms of financial reporting (PH will look into this). LB and GW will continue to work on this over the coming months with a view to a schedule of Directors financial priorities being produced for the new financial year. LB has been working with Entrusts Accountant finance support officer looking at budget and cashflows however has still not been able to extract adequate reports. LB continues to work PS to resolve these issues. LB suggested that once available monthly reports derived from the PS financials system should be sent to directors prior to each meeting but highlighted that these would report on the previous month due to the timing of the Directors meetings. LB is awaiting the release of the 3-5 year budget model from Entrust and will start transferring the workings that her and PL have been producing over the last few months. LB confirmed that budgets for 16/17 are expected to be released at end of Feb/beginning of March. LB talked of the difficulty of benchmarking with no historical data (as the Academy only opened on 1 August) and also how effective this would be anyway due to the unique set up of the MAT, but she plans to spend a day at a similar MAT in order to compare systems and see how they have managed benchmarking when time allows.

LB also asked the Board to start thinking about KPIs for the next financial year (Sept 16) and reminded Directors that whilst some should be associated with finance, education KPI's were also important.

c) **EHT's Office refurbishment:** Directors were given three quotations received from companies to refurbish PL's office with prices ranging from £4010 to £9100. Whilst the value of the office furniture was within PL's approval limits as electrical work, carpets and decoration would also be required Directors were asked to approve a budget for the works (£15,000 maximum). It was decided that Strachans at offered the most appropriate option and Directors agreed that it was important that the EHT's office should set the tone for the professional profile of the school. The office would be used for MAT Board meetings, SLT meetings, community meetings etc. As there had been a healthy carry forward from the old school fund account, the current GAG funding would not be supporting the project and Directors felt this was acceptable. The refurbishment was approved by Directors, who went on to discuss the presentation of children's art work on the walls.

9. **HR -**

a) **Staffing/Recruitment Update:** An advert has been placed for an Assistant Headteacher and two applicants will be interviewed. They will be observed teaching and then the interviews will have two parts, a values interview with HR representative Sian Carter and LB and a general interview with HB, SC and PL. The interviews will take place on Thursday 11 February at 1pm.

Confidential Item Removed

b) **Absence Insurance Update:** Absence insurance has been taken out and this was approved by Directors. CH asked whether the county insurance scheme had been considered but PL and LB have been finding that other providers are often better value for money. LB also reported encountering difficulties with a claim at HP last year.

10. **Curriculum -**

a) **School Reports:** These have been made available to Directors to read and PH commented on the number of trips and events going on in the schools. LB asked Directors to make comments on the reports: whether certain items are not required or whether more information is needed. A parent of a new child in school has expressed his appreciation of the variety of trips provided, which have not always required parental contributions. PL thanked his staff for all their hard work.

b) **Data:** PL talked through the presentation of autumn term data on Maths and Literacy in the three schools, using the new levels. For Maths, at RC 64% of Y5 were working below the accepted level and there is some concern about Y6; at SM there is some concern about Y1 and Y5/6 children.

TH data was discussed but due to the small cohorts the item has been removed for confidentiality.

PL said many headteachers are concerned about the effect of the change in curriculum and how it affects Y6 tests, but he hopes that spring term data should show an improvement in pupils' levels. In Literacy the MAT literacy coordinator no longer wishes to receive the additional point given to raise literacy levels, but it is hoped that the new Assistant Headteacher will take on this role. PL considered that it is easier to monitor year-on-year progression using the new levels and advised Directors that he has set the level for expected progress at a high level. PH commented on how difficult the SPAG test is for Y6 pupils.

c) **Pupil Premium:** The draft reports for the period Apr 16 – Mar 17 were shared with Directors.

d) **Sports Funding Reports:** The updated reports to include for the period Sept 16 – Aug 17 were shared with Directors.

e) **Self Evaluation:** PL and JW have looked at the Ofsted criteria and measured the MAT's progress against these; PH will review their judgements and challenge them if he feels there is a lack of evidence for these. Directors agreed that this was a very appropriate format and it is planned to use the same format for teaching standards (CH to be involved) with an overview of each school and Finance (PH to look at this).

11. **Directors -**

a) **Revisions to the 'Board of Directors' Roles and Responsibilities' Document. Governance Document:** Directors agreed revisions to the Board, now including Mrs J Smith, and the Governance Document; these documents will now be put on to the website. John Bowman was thanked for his contribution to these documents. PL drew attention to the document outlining 21 questions for the MAT Board to consider.

b) **Training Requirements :** HB, CH and Sian Carter wish to receive Safeguarding training to ensure they are up to date with any recent changes. Various dates for the twilight session (4-6pm) were discussed, with most Directors able to attend on 22/3, 11/4, 12/4, 25/5 or 26/5 but LB would like the training on one of the earlier dates if possible. PH, CH and SC would like Data and RaiseOnline training.

c) **LAGs Update:** John Bowman and Mrs Halifax were thanked for their contributions in putting together a questionnaire/application form for people wishing to join the LAGs. Directors decided that an Elected member of staff position was not required as the Heads of School were in place. However CH thought that staff should feel included in some way and it was agreed that members of staff (teachers, TAs or others) should be invited to report to the termly meetings on a rota basis.

The position of PTA representative (providing it was a parent) was approved and it was decided that there should also be a Community representative, e.g. from the PCC or PC. Information on the LAGs will be sent out after half-term and it is planned that the first meeting be held in the summer term.

12. Any Other Business -

a) **Diocesan Protocol:** a diocesan inspection is due to take place at RC in autumn 2016 or spring 2017.

b) **Website/Intranet Update:** Directors were shown the new MAT intranet site with a dedicated area for Governance which members and directors have access to. LB advised Directors that all documents would now be stored in this area and they will receive notifications once a new document has been added (i.e. reports, agenda, minutes etc).

c) **Any other business:** HB reported that the Headteacher's Performance Review will take place that afternoon, with new targets to be set.

PH expressed concern about car parking at the school, particularly with regard to the building of the shop in the pub car park. This will be discussed at future Directors' meetings.

LB reported that there will be a holiday football club at half-term and Easter on the Showfield.

PL reported that Walsall LA has been chosen to provide moderation for the phonic, KS1 and KS2 tests as their package was cheaper than Staffordshire's and included headteacher and teacher updates meaning better value for money. LB also thought it was important to widen the network of service providers with a view to being able to offer the MAT's traded services outside of Staffordshire.

d) **Date and time of next meetings:** 11th March 2016 at 8am

Item	Action to be taken	Action by whom	Action by when
4	To support Dyslexia Friendly status assessment	MHC	23/2/16 and 24/2/16
5b and 12c	Headteacher's Performance Management Review to take place and reported back to next meeting.	PL/HB	11/3/16
6 and 11b	Arrange Safeguarding twilight training and RaiseOnline training	LB/Directors/PL	tba
7a and 7b	Policies: write out acronyms in full, with glossary	LB	11/3/16
7a	Provide form for reporting allegations against staff	CH	11/3/16
8b	To identify areas of Finance to review, to include looking at KPIs. To review specified areas.	PH/Directors GW/LB	Ongoing
9a	Interviews for Assistant Head	PL/HB/LB/SC/ Sian Carter	11/2/16
10a	Give comments on School Reports	Directors to LB	11/3/16
10e	Review Self-Evaluation judgements. Use format for teaching standards and finance.	PH CH/PH	11/3/16
11a	Consider 21 questions for MAT	Directors (Sign in to Office 365, go to Sites, then Team Site, Governance, Directors meetings, Feb 2016, Agenda Item 11.)	11/3/16
11c	To send out information and application forms on LAGs	LB	Before Easter
12d	Note change of meeting dates	Directors	Now

Signed..... Date

Chair of Directors