

**Directors Meeting Minutes**  
**13th May 2016 8am**

Attendees : Mr P Lovern (PL) (Executive Head), Mrs H Bowman (HB) (Chair of Directors), Mrs L Brown (LB) (Business Manager), Mr P Halifax (PH) (Vice Chair of Directors), Mrs M Havelock-Crozier (MHC) (Director), Mrs C Humphries (CH) (Director), Mrs J Smith (JS) (Director)  
Clerk to Directors: Mrs A Howard (AH)

RC: Richard Crosse  
SM: St Mary's  
HP: Howard Primary  
EHT: Executive Headteacher  
LAG: Local Advisory Group  
KPI: Key Performance Indicator  
CIF: Condition Improvement Funding  
EY: Early Years  
KB: Kings Bromley  
GPS : Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling  
NAO : National Audit Office  
EFA : Education Funding Agency

1. **Prayer** - PL started the meeting with a prayer.
2. **Apologies** - Mrs S Cockayne (SC) (Director), Mr G Wood (GW) (Director)
3. **Pecuniary Interest** - PL advised that he would include work undertaken for Entrust (payment made to school) as part of his declaration of Pecuniary Interest. HB emphasised the importance of transparency in all school matters.
4. **Minutes of last meeting** -
  - a) **Actions taken:** HB has attended a KB Parish Council meeting to answer questions about LAGs; she also raised the issue of the possible development of the Cricket Club site and asked that the Parish Council liaise with RC on this. PH has been in contact with the Chair of the Parish Council to discuss housing developments. No formal planning application has yet been received; although the Parish Council does not make decisions on planning applications, it is able to present its views to the District Council. A member of the Parish Council is Head of Planning at Lichfield and he will liaise with the school. The Parish Council Chair indicated that there is a possibility of larger scale development, which could include a field for housing, a new cricket field and a parking field. The Horticultural Society has indicated that it does not wish to offer permanent parking to the school. The Parish Council Chair also highlighted problems with the lack of footpath and insufficient lighting from the present housing development, but RC does not wish there to be a gate between the houses and the school playing field as this could compromise security. The Parish Council would like RC to consider using the Village Hall as a pre-school venue, but following discussion the Directors agreed that this was not a viable option. PL reported that he had attended the Parish Council AGMs in each of the three villages.
  - b) **Items to carry forward:** Items 4a and 4b are ongoing, Item 11a will be on the agenda for the next meeting for approval, other items appear on the present agenda or have been completed.
  - c) **Approval and signing of minutes:** These were agreed as a true record and signed.

5. **Safeguarding Update** - All Directors have attended training on Safeguarding, receiving certificates of attendance and feedback forms.
6. **Governance** -
  - a) **LAGs:** The deadline for applications has been extended to 3 June 2016, to enable certain Parish Councils and Trustees to discuss this at their meetings. It was decided to hold a sub-committee meeting (HB, PH, MHC, SC, PL) after the next Directors' meeting on 10 June to consider applications. The first meeting of the LAG will take place on Thursday 7 July, 4-6pm, meeting at RC and having a tour of the three schools by minibus. LAG members will receive induction information and CH will contribute to providing ideas for the induction pack. The first formal meeting of the LAG will take place in the autumn term.
7. **Training** - PL asked for Directors' views on training: there will be training on Raise Online data for all Directors, but some training could be accessed by individual Directors and cascaded to others. HB suggested training on the Curriculum and PL agreed that Curriculum Leaders could present information on curriculum planning and assessment. Training will be set for the year from September and CH suggested using the Governors handbook as a guide on training matters e.g. Finance. PL would like Directors to come into school during the next academic year, to undertake lesson observations with PL, together with book trawls and inspection of data.
8. **Policies and Procedures** –
  - a) **Charges and Remissions:** LB advised the cost of school meals supplied by SCC increased to £2.15 in April and Directors agreed to increase TSSMAT charges to £2.15 from Sept 16. After discussion it was agreed that TSSMAT will continue to pay for music lessons and educational visits for Pupil Premium children at least for the next financial year. LB confirmed that she would make the changes to the draft Charges and Remissions Policy she had produced and email to Directors before the June meeting.
  - b) **Probationary Period Policy:** Staffs County Council has abandoned the Support Staff Probationary Period, but it was agreed that TSSMAT should continue with this.
  - d) **Attendance Policy:** This policy was updated so that in the case of separated/divorced parents, the absence form now has to be signed by two parents or each parent has to complete the form. This was agreed by Directors. It was decided to make it clear to parents that 8.40am is the official start time of the school day. Policy approved.
  - e) **Other Policies:** Mobile phones: Children are not allowed to have mobile phones in school or on the school premises under any circumstances (including out of school events). Following on from an incident Directors agreed that parents should be reminded that school visitors (including parents) are not permitted to use mobile phones in school in areas where pupils are present. Directors approved the revised mobile phone policy. There was discussion on the policy regarding aggressive parents; JS considered it to be a very good policy, CH recommended that a Health and Safety incident form should be completed in these instances and PH advised that the policy should cover members of the School family, including staff. It was agreed that PL should be joined by the Chair of Directors to discuss any incidents involving aggression. LB had sent out a number of policies to Directors and these were all approved.
9. **Finance** -
  - a) **March Accounts Return update:** The accountant spent a week in school at the beginning of May to produce the March accounts return. Due to leave of absence she will not return until w/c 16<sup>th</sup> May to finalise. It is expected that the return will be available for Directors and ready for submission by the end of the week commencing 27<sup>th</sup> May.
  - b) **Audit :** LB advised the Directors that the MAT has been chosen as a sample MAT to submit an alternative assurance validation return to the NAO via the EFA by the end of May. LB informed Directors that the return would be discussed at the planned Finance meeting of 27<sup>th</sup> May prior to submission. LB advised Directors that she would forward a copy of the return to all Directors for information.

c) **Payroll:** This has been put out to tender for September and three companies have sent quotations: Entrust, Walsall and Stoke City. LB felt that Stoke City offered the best options in terms of cost and ease of use, and was particularly pleased that a dedicated contact would be made available. CH expressed some reservations as it is a new system, so there may be some glitches. However it is only required to sign up for one year, so it was agreed that this should be approved. CH suggested that Entrust may be asking for a payment of £500 to transfer data, LB agreed to check this.

d) **Staff laptops:** LB referred Directors to the previous recommendation recommended for the purchase of staff laptops for every teacher as the work stations were no longer fit for purpose and the laptops could be used for PPA. PH and LB have been comparing quotes and awaiting final details. Directors agreed to a maximum budget of £12,000 for the purchase.

e) **KPIs:** Directors discuss the analysis of the KPI's agreed last September (Pupil attendance, Pupil/Family Satisfaction and Staff Satisfaction). GW is in the process of producing some dashboard reports to display the information (using the model produced in December 15). Directors were reminded to consider the KPIs for September 2016; suggestions received to date were Admissions, Attainment & Standards and Finance related KPI's. LB advised Directors that she would work with Gareth on some ideas ready for the next meeting. CH advised that it was important to establish when problems are resolved. JS thought that suggestion boxes could be set up in schools so that the number of issues arising could be measured.

g) **CIF funding:** It is planned to apply for CIF funding in September to assist with the development plans of the three schools. HB recommended obtaining plans and applying for planning permission now. It was agreed that PL should approach an architect/parent at this pre-planning stage to ask him to produce plans, then it will be put out to tender to manage the project. PH will pass on the telephone number of a building contractor he has used.

h) **Audit:** Directors agreed that the value of land and buildings for SM and RC should be included in the accounts, as auditors have pointed out that this is legally required. This is an EFA recommendation, but the Directors pointed out that TSSMAT does not own these assets and so cannot sell them. HB was asked to inform the Members of the decision at the next Members meeting.

LB advised the Directors that she had started working through the Client Assist Schedule (emailed to all Directors) ahead of the audit due to start in August running through to October time. Directors discussed the issue of internal audit and the fact that the Auditors had suggested that the original plan to have someone within the Board to do this may not be the most appropriate method. PL and LB will investigate the option of peer to peer support with another MAT. LB also felt that this was an excellent opportunity to benchmark, share best practice and promote the traded services of the MAT.

i) LB reminded the board that HB, PH, GW, PL and LB would be meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> May to discuss other finance related items.

## 10. HR and Staffing

a) **Recruitment:** The Assistant Head has settled in well. PL informed Directors that a part-time teacher has resigned. An advert had been put out for a temporary appointment; there were only three applications, but an experienced teacher applied and has been appointed on a permanent basis with a TLR 3 for 12 months to improve EY and develop Forest Schools (and the outdoor environment) at SM.

b) **Staffing review:** PL handed out Staffing Review version 1 for consideration by Directors. This detailed the roles and responsibilities of Senior Leaders, with a view to developing Heads of Schools, and also Middle Management staff. There was a discussion on staffing arrangements from September and ideas for restructuring the staffing structure; Directors agreed with PL that it was important to look at the skill set of staff and set out clear roles and responsibilities within TSSMAT. PL advised Directors that a review of support staff was also underway.

LB and PL discussed with Directors the role of the Finance Assistant – due to confidentiality this item has been removed.

## 11. Premises and Health & Safety Update -

- a) **Energy Efficiency:** PL and LB are working with a parent who is looking at energy efficiency at the three schools with possible options for the replacement of boilers (funded) and conversion of lighting to LED. This may remove the need for the Summer Directors committee. Further information will follow once available.
- b) **Howard EY Development:** PL is consulting at HP and SM about the provision of nursery education, offering 15 hours up to full-time care. At RC there are 9 nursery places offering 15 hours and the possibility of extending this to full time is being investigated.
- c) **BCC Lease:** LB reported that the extension of the lease for the playing fields at HP had been approved at local level however the item is being taken to full cabinet in July for final approval. LB will update Directors and Auditors once a confirmed decision has been received.

## 12. Curriculum -

- a) **Data:** PL said it was hard to judge the data at present with the change in the curriculum requirements. A robust discussion was held and reference made to the Data reports (emailed to all Directors prior to the meeting) for more in depth information. PL reported that headline data suggests that spelling is an area for improvement. Spelling results impact on the scores for GPS. Due to increased demands of the national curriculum and the programmes of study for Writing, children in the older year groups are not attaining the higher levels. The percentage of children achieving the higher levels is not as high as the MAT would wish. There are a number of children within these year groups that are performing below the expected level because they are being exposed to a more demanding curriculum part way through their primary education. Results demonstrate that children in the lower age groups are meeting the demands of the curriculum. PL has agreed to be part of a research project which will be comparing the data from purchased tests used in school and the National Curriculum test data. There is a very positive picture at HP in Y4 and below, but results in Y5 and Y6 are not expected to be as good, due to the inadequate teaching under the previous Leadership. At SM there are improvements to be made, particularly in boys' achievement and the results for Y6 are not expected to be as high as RC. At RC the results at Y6 could be good as the children demonstrate a good work ethic and there has been consistency of teaching. For all three schools, grammar, punctuation and spelling are an issue and the Assistant Head has already put changes in place to improve this. Writing is also a development point.
- b) **Music Hub Award:** Directors were very pleased with this and Sally Parkes was thanked for all her hard work in helping to achieve this award.

## 13. Academy Improvement and Development -

- a) **Website/Prospectus:** PL and Directors are disappointed with the work carried out by the website designers. It was agreed that PH should liaise with GW to write a letter to them to express Directors' disappointment at the standard of their work.
- b) **Classes for Sept 16:** PL discussed options with Directors however these will be finalised next half term.
- c) **Term dates:** Term dates for 2017/18 will follow the same format as 2016/17, with staff having 5 weeks in summer and 2 weeks at the end of May.
- d) **SEF:** A copy has been sent to Directors for comment.
- e) **EY and Wrap around care:** This will be looked at in more detail at a future meeting.

## 14. Any Other Business -

- a) **Admissions and Appeals:** LB reported that no appeals had been received to date; the deadline is Monday.
- b) **SATs:** PL thanked Directors for observing the SATs in the three schools. HB reported exemplary conduct and a high level of security. JS thought the atmosphere was calm and the children's behaviour was superb; she enjoyed experiencing what the SATs were like. MHC thought that everything possible was done by staff to make the experience stress-free for children; she also welcomed the post-SATs events organised by staff.

c) **School reports:** PL had sent out copies of EHT reports for each school to Directors and Directors found these reports very useful. PL thanked staff for their hard work and after-school activities provided for the children.

d) **Directors' meetings:** Directors acknowledged that it was difficult to fit all the items into a 2-hour meeting. The possibility of a full-day meeting for Directors was discussed. LB reminded the committee that HB, GW, PH, PL and LB would be meeting 27<sup>th</sup> May to discuss finance only matters with a view to GW reporting to Full Directors on 10<sup>th</sup> June. LB advised Directors that the same group would need to meet independently again between 10<sup>th</sup> June and 8<sup>th</sup> July to discuss the proposed 16-17 budget ahead of distribution prior to and approval on 8<sup>th</sup> July. It was agreed that interim finance meetings may well need to continue in 2016 – 2017.

e) **Date and time of next Directors' meetings:** See dates below.

Friday 27<sup>th</sup> May 3pm – HB, GW, PL and LB Finance Only

Friday 10 June 8am – Full Directors, PL and LB

Finance Only Meeting - Date TBC between 10<sup>th</sup> June and 8<sup>th</sup> July – HB, GW, PH, PL and LB

Friday 8 July 8am – Full Directors, PL and LB

Signed..... Date .....

Chair of Directors

Item	Action to be taken	Action by whom	Action by when
6a	Sub-committee meeting on LAGs.	HB, PH, MHC, SC, PL	10/6/16, after Directors' meeting
6a	Prepare induction packs for LAGs	LB/CH	7/7/16
8a	Make final changes to Charges and Remissions policy and email to Directors	LB	10/6/16
9g	Development of school building at RC: Approach architect for plans Apply for CIF funding Let PL know of Project Managers/Architects	PL PL/LB/HB PH/Directors	asap September 2016 by 10/6/16
10b	Confidential Item	PL/CH/HB	10/6/16
13a	Write to website designers.	PH/GW	10/6/16
14d	Arrange interim finance meeting for HB, GW, PH, PL and LB	LB	8/6/16