

Directors Meeting Minutes 26 May 2017 8am

Attendees : Mr P Lovern (PL) (Executive Head), Mrs H Bowman (HB) (Chair of Directors), Mrs S Cockayne (SC) (Director), Mrs A Hodgson (AHg) (Director of Business Operations), Mr P Halifax (PH) (Vice-Chair of Directors), Mrs C Humphries (CH) (Director), Mr G Wood (GW) (Director)
Also Mr C Whiting (CW), Accountant and Academy Adviser, for Items 9 and 10.

Clerk to Directors: Mrs A Howard (AH)

RC: Richard Crosse

SM: St Mary's

HP: Howard Primary

SEN: Special Educational Needs

EYFS: Early Years and Foundation Studies

HLTA: Higher Level Teaching Assistant

1. **Prayer** - PL started the meeting with a prayer.
2. **Apologies** - Mrs M Havelock-Crozier (MHC) (Director), Mrs J Smith (JS) (Director)
3. **Pecuniary Interest** - There were no changes to pecuniary interest forms. With regards to Statements of Assurance, PL has received a Statement of Assurance from Member David Grewer regarding consultancy work, Member John Bowman is not making any charge to TSSMAT and CH will complete one for 1/4/17 to 31/3/18. CH was thanked for all she does to assist TSSMAT.
4. **Minutes of last meetings** - The minutes of 28.4.17 were agreed and were signed by HB. The minutes were reviewed for confidential items.
5. **Charges and Remissions for September** - The Charges and Remission Policy was reviewed. It was proposed that the cost for school meals should be increased from £2.15 to £2.20 in line with Staffordshire. Children receiving free school meals will continue to receive subsidised or free school trips. Charges for Before and After School Care Club were discussed and it was agreed that these should be raised by 2% in line with inflation to £11.75 for the full session. PH considered that the charges for the Before School Care Club were high, especially for a short stay, but prices need to cover staffing costs. The charge for Nursery wrap-around care is in line with the amount paid by the government, but HB thought this should be explained carefully to parents as there has been some confusion over Nursery costs and details. The cost of peripatetic music tuition is £75 per term and has to be paid in advance (it can be paid in instalments) as the school has to pay the full amount early in the year; again, this should be explained carefully to parents. The policy was approved by Directors.
6. **Holidays** - Holiday dates for 2018/19 were presented to Directors. Most parents and staff have responded positively to the longer May/June half-term holiday and staff like the inset week before the autumn term to prepare fully for the new year and receive training. In 2018, school will start on 28 August for staff and 3 September for children, dates are then the same as for Staffordshire until 27 May when the school will close until 7 June. The school year will end on 22 July for pupils (this is a Monday but could be a Fun Day) and on 23 July for staff.
7. **Gift Register** - The Gift Register will be signed off by GW. The maximum amount for a gift given by the school is £25.
8. **Premises** - Directors were pleased to note that the CIF Funding bid for RC was successful; PL and AHg have met with Entrust and a company where a parent works to discuss managing the project. Both companies have provided similar figures, but PL, AHg and HB considered that Entrust have

more awareness of CIF funding requirements, regulations in school building etc and are very proactive. They already have a list of approved suppliers so there is a simpler tendering process. PL discussed the proposed building with Directors and additional plans for linking the classrooms. Work will include an extra classroom, a Multi-Use Games Area and car park. The bid for funding for a new boiler at SM has not been approved, however PL and AHg are making an appeal. It is planned to refurbish Class 1 at HP to include an improved kitchen area.

9. **March Accounts** - CW joined the meeting to present the balance sheet with AHg. He could not present the figures for the budget as there is now a new budget system link between PS Financials and Orovia and the figures have not yet been uploaded so are not up to date. However, he was able to give the figures for income and expenditure, showing that TSSMAT is showing a lesser deficit than projected. Staffing accounts for 87% of the costs, which in most academy chains is around 70% (but 73-75% is considered a good average), with comparisons often showing that outstanding schools have lower staffing cost percentages. However it was agreed that it is difficult to benchmark schools in different situations, especially with small schools. Schools' growth is an issue as an increase in pupil numbers is not reflected in funding until 12 months later. Directors looked at fixed assets, current assets and current liabilities. TSSMAT reserves have been used and it was agreed that this cannot continue at this rate. There is a shortfall of £27,000 in the proposed budget for 2017-18, but PH agreed that the budget is moving in the right direction considering the deficit budget of £214,000 set for 2016-17. GW asked about quarterly and monthly figures to show incomings and outgoings and CW confirmed that will be available for Directors to review from March 2017. Over £99,000 is due to be claimed back in VAT and it is important that VAT repayments should be claimed back in future on a regular basis.
10. **Budget Forecast Return 2016-2017** - CW confirmed that this has been completed and submitted on time and explained the completed form to Directors.
11. **Budget** - Directors considered the budget for 2017-2018, with the classing structure discussed in Item 12. Although it is showing a deficit budget of £27,000, Directors thought the aim should be to set a balanced budget as there are possibilities of making some further reductions. They asked PL to discuss the situation with staff and ask for their suggestions for making reductions. Ideas could include not providing free lunches for staff and thereby reducing kitchen staff hours and asking parents for voluntary contributions towards the purchase of consumables e.g. art materials. Staff will now have a code to use the photocopier in school. It was agreed not to renew the grounds maintenance contract after 31/8/17 and to ask the handyman/caretaker to undertake grounds maintenance; equipment will have to be purchased for him to use.
12. **Classes for September** - PL presented the classing structures proposed for September and these were discussed.
13. **Staffing** - Staffing issues were discussed.
14. **Any Other Business** - CH talked through a proposed contract for new employees of TSSMAT giving the academy some slight or potential savings in future. This would look much the same as the present teachers' pay and conditions contract, with some amendments regarding statutory redundancy pay, sickness and absence. PH questioned the proposed changes in redundancy pay, but it was agreed that TSSMAT would have the flexibility to enhance these payments if appropriate. CH will arrange for the contract to be sent out to Directors and asked them to contact her with any queries.

HB discussed with Directors a letter received from a school wishing to join TSSMAT. She thought it would be a good opportunity to expand the Trust by accepting a high-achieving school; it would still be a challenge but would also present many opportunities. PL proposed that the six weeks after half-term should be used to look at due diligence; there is a good number of pupils, but the financial state and staffing situation are not known in detail and both schools need to look at various aspects of the conversion. TSSMAT will top-slice 5% to cover administration and the school will pay for other items. It is planned that the school will move towards using the same systems (Integrus, IT, accountancy and banking, health and safety, HR). There will be a £25,000 conversion grant but a lot of this will be taken up with lawyers' fees. The DfE will be approached in September

with a possible conversion date of 1/4/18, although there may be land issues and legal problems which delay this. HB suggested that John Bowman meet up with AHg to discuss due diligence issues. GW asked why the school would wish to join TSSMAT and PL thought they appreciated the model and values, and joining TSSMAT offered strength in numbers and long-term stability. Directors approved moving towards the school joining TSSMAT. A Federation has looked into joining TSSMAT but will probably choose a larger MAT. Another school has also shown interest in joining TSSMAT. There was discussion on ensuring that a strategic link is maintained with local secondary school academies. PL discussed amendments to the Safeguarding Policy which will be distributed to the Directors and was approved in principle. CH suggested that MHC as Safeguarding Director checks and reports on safeguarding once a term.

Dates of future meetings:

Directors meetings

23rd June 8am Business Functions
 14th July 8am Teaching and Learning

LAG meetings

12th July 4pm

Members meetings

12th July 8am

Signed..... Date

Chair of Directors

Item	Action to be taken	Action by whom	Action by when
3	Completion of Statement of Assurance form	CH	23/6/17
11	Discussion with staff about ideas for possible savings	PL	23/6/17
13	Confidential item	HB	23/6/17
14	Send out proposed contract to Directors to read.	CH/Directors	23/6/17
14	Due diligence enquiries	PL/AHg/John Bowman	End summer term
14	Distribute Safeguarding Policy	PL	23/6/17
14	Monitor Safeguarding in TSSMAT on a termly basis	MHC	From now onwards