

Minutes of Members' and Directors' Meeting 6 March 2020 8am

Attendees : Mr P Lovern (PL) (Executive Head), Mr C Hopkins (CHo) (Chair of Members), Rev S Davis (SD) (Member), Mrs H Bowman (HB) (Chair of Directors), Mr C Bradshaw-Smith (CBS) (Director), Mrs S Cockayne (SC) (Director), Mr P Halifax (PH) (Vice-Chair of Directors), Mrs J Smith (JS) (Director), Mrs C Humphries (CH) (Director) by telephone

Also present: for Item 5 Mr J Wynn (JW) (HT SM), Miss H Jennings (HJ) (RE Curriculum Leader); for Item 6 Miss R Mills (RM) (HT TH); for Item 8 two representatives from MLG Accountants.

Clerk: Mrs A Howard (AH)

RC: Richard Crosse

SM: St Mary's

TH: The Howard

HBT: Homophobic, Biphobic, Transphobic

NPQH: National Professional Qualification for Headship

CIF: Condition Improvement Funding

ESFA: Education and Skills Funding Agency

FAR: Finance, Audit and Risk

EHCP: Education, Health and Care Plan

RSC: Regional Schools Commissioners

TCAF: Trust Capacity Fund

1. **Welcome, Prayer** - CH welcomed everyone to the meeting and led the prayer.
2. **Apologies** - Mr D Grever (DG) (Member), Mrs M Havelock-Crozier (MHC) (Vice-Chair of Directors). CHo made apologies for having to leave the meeting at 8.45am. AH will update the attendance register.
3. **Pecuniary Interest** - Directors and Members confirmed that there were no changes to pecuniary interest declarations; the Pecuniary Interest Register is now up to date.
4. **Minutes of last meetings** - The minutes of the AGM meeting held on 20.12.19 were agreed as a true copy by Members (these had already been approved by Directors); these were signed by CHo. The minutes of the Directors' meeting on 24.1.20 were agreed as a true copy by Directors and signed by HB. Confidential items were agreed.
5. **RE and Collective Worship** - JW and HJ presented an update, saying that a SIAMS inspection is due at SM during this half-term. The Christian vision is underpinned by the MAT motto 'Believe and Achieve', which reflects the ethos across the four schools: belief in God and the pupils' belief in themselves and the aim to be the best they can be. The MAT values of Love, Friendship and Respect are integral to the children's education and are referred to in discussions about mental health and wellbeing, HBT bullying and developing spirituality. Each child in the MAT is valued as God's child, kept safe and cared for. JW recommended that Directors and Members look at the SM website, where the front pages reflect the vision and values, with a reference to a passage from the Bible (Isaiah 40, v31). HJ suggested that Directors and Members could try [the quiz](#) (click on link) which all the school staff have undertaken.

At SM there is an Act of Collective Worship every day, including worship in church every Wednesday. The school Worship team meet with the local vicar every week to plan the service. RE is taught weekly as a discrete subject following a 2-year cycle. There has been staff training on looking at the Bible and following the timeline. There is teaching on Islamism and Judaism in the different key stages. JW suggested that Directors and LAG members could have an agenda item for every meeting on Christian distinctiveness.

With regards to links with the community, JW and HJ mentioned the community links through the Directors (MHC is named as the Link Director for Christian ethos) and Members, LAG members, the local church and vicar at Colton and support from the Lichfield Diocese. Charity links include the Rugeley Food Bank, Macmillan Cancer, WWF and fundraising for equipment for a disabled child. Within the MAT there is lot of support for SM from the other three schools and the recruitment process highlights the church focus.

Since the last SIAMS inspection in 2015, there has been a change in staffing and a new vicar. There is now a formal evaluation of collective worship, a strong link with the church and a focus on children's resilience, problem solving, teamwork, mindfulness and establishing a moral compass. It was agreed that as a Church majority MAT, the appropriate Christian language should be used e.g. collective worship, not assembly. CBS asked whether parents who are non-believers would feel included; JW and HJ emphasised that worship is invitational, where children are encouraged to involve themselves on a personal level, and SM is an inclusive school where each child is valued. Parents from outside the catchment area will often choose a church school. JS suggested more mixing with children from different areas with a variety of cultures and religions; HJ agreed that this is important and confirmed that steps are taken to provide a variety of experiences. HB congratulated JW and HJ on their comprehensive policy; the staff and Lichfield diocese were thanked for their team work. Directors and Members agreed that it had been an inspiring presentation.

6. **English** - RM gave a presentation on the English Action Plan with a focus on Reading 2019-21. This was recorded as part of her work for NPQH. The project has been introduced at TH and is being rolled out across the MAT as a School Improvement Priority. Whereas attainment levels have been high, progress in KS2 at TH has been negative for the last three years. The aims are to improve progress measures so that the MAT is in the top 20% of schools for progress, increase the numbers working at a higher standard in Reading (and for all to be at least at Expected Standard) and avoid the fluctuation shown by small cohorts. General aims are to develop life-long readers and engender a love of reading. Four key priorities are: for teaching to be good, with elements of outstanding; the reading curriculum to support children's reading skills and encourage reading for pleasure; to celebrate and promote books every day; to promote a 'word-rich' environment. Success will be measured by data, pupil progress meetings, pupil and parent voice, learning walks and the environment. Costs include extra resources, staff time and training, parental engagement. There are risks associated with staff illness or movement, the willingness of staff, workload, small cohorts and CBS suggested that lack of parental support could also be seen as a risk. The value of the MAT lay in being able to rotate books around the schools and cover different topics, suitable for different groups of children; also book initiatives would be across the MAT and inter-school reading competitions could take place.

SD asked whether the use of phonics is promoted for certain children into KS2 and RM will check whether this is the case in all the schools. PH asked whether Directors will be able to judge the effectiveness of the overall spending. At the end of the project, RM hopes to see improved attitudes to Reading, improved teaching, the use of challenging texts and a vibrancy around Reading in the schools. Directors will be kept informed of progress through HT reports and RM will incorporate reports from school Reading Champions in her report. She asked that a Director be appointed as Link Director for this project. Directors and Members gave their support for this project and thanked RM for her presentation.

7. **CEO Report - Staffing** - PL presented his report, informing Directors and Members that the HT at RC is still absent on sick leave. However, the acting HT is ensuring that things are running smoothly. At TH, the cook is away on sick leave and meals are being cooked at RC. He confirmed the appointments of J. Bowman as Business Manager and S. Cole as Finance Manager, both on 0.6 contracts. A child has now been given an EHCP with 15 hours of support and Directors agreed that a post of TA should be advertised.

Coronavirus - PL went on to talk about the effects of Coronavirus, saying that children are being advised to wash their hands correctly and use and bin tissues; parents are advised to use the

government website for more information. Some extra supplies have been ordered, including the supplies for the new year in September. JS offered to send PL a video on hand washing, instructions to be put up in the toilets and other information.

School Improvement - PL reported that TSSMAT is developing middle leaders with English and Maths Champions in each school. RM is Curriculum Leader for English across the MAT, the HT at AS is Curriculum Leader for Maths, JW and the HT at RC are Curriculum Leaders for the Foundation Subjects. Following the new Ofsted framework, English has been a focus for a thorough review and PL was very impressed by the Reading at TH. The focus for next term will be Maths.

PL and HB attended a meeting at the RSC and in the letter from the RSC, sent to Members and Directors, the RSC is happy with the standards, ethos and vision of TSSMAT, but is concerned about sustainability as the emphasis is now on larger MATs. PL is making a bid to TCAF (with the assistance of DG) under the heading of more capacity for rural schools and this money would enable HTs to be released to support other schools. He considers that the TSSMAT staff are of excellent quality, with many strengths. Issues to be reviewed with this funding would include school-to-school standards, back office functions and marketing, looking at strategy and good practice.

Performance Management - PL and JW are working with Staffs Heads, PL is planning to work with RM and Tamworth Heads and will liaise with Rugeley Heads.

IT - Staffs Tech have started an IT audit of TSSMAT. Broadband for the four schools will be provided by Staffs Tech.

SATs - Confidential item

8. **Finance** - At present MLG Accountants are acting as Finance Managers for TSSMAT and two representatives, the person working two days a week at the MAT dealing with invoices, income and accountancy adjustments, and a director of the company, came to give a report. *Confidential item*. The Director of MLG reported on the planned migration of Accounting services to Xero from PS Financial Services. He answered CBS's questions, confirming that there were guidelines on best practice for schools, with codes relevant to the school being adopted, and these will be used to report to the ESFA. A cost-centred analysis will be given, with specific areas reported on (Key Indicators), and restricted and non-restricted items will be clearly shown; it is easy to drill down to see what money is available. The migration will be straightforward. The management accounts should be produced monthly, with Income and Expenditure, a Balance Sheet and Cash Flow. The report will be checked with the CEO and the audit trail will show any editing which has taken place. A return to the ESFA is due in May and in July a 3-year forecast will be required. The FAR committee will undertake internal scrutiny. MLG were thanked for all their hard work and support.
Charges and Remissions - Directors and Members agreed that charges should be increased by 3% from September.
9. **Trust Growth** - PL stated that the change of name of TSSMAT to The Shire Schools MAT could be confused with The Shire Learning Trust and suggested The Staffordshire Schools MAT. However, this would limit any growth to Staffordshire schools and CH suggested a complete rebrand and relaunch. This will be further discussed at the next meeting.
10. **Premises** - The outcomes of bids for CIF funding are still awaited.
11. **Admissions** - PL presented the Admissions numbers for September. In Reception, AS will have 15 children, TH 9 children, RC 6 children and SM 9 children. In Nursery, RC will have 10 children and SM 4 children.
12. **Safeguarding** - Monitoring and reviews of Safeguarding issues are now held more regularly, at every staff meeting. Annual updates are given, notifying any changes to Safeguarding policy. Staff are undertaking a quiz on Safeguarding issues as part of their training. Directors are invited to attend the Safeguarding training held during the inset week in August and CH agreed that Directors should have Safeguarding training at least once every two years.
13. **Health and Safety** - JS will visit SM next week to review H&S. She reported that there is a plan to check for lead in water pipes in schools. JS asked whether Anson has been inspected by Elite for

H&S and PL confirmed that a full report has been given and discussed by the Local Governing Body. A copy of the report will be sent to JS.

- 14. **GDPR** - A report will be made at the next meeting.
- 15. **Policy Updates** - There were no updates to review.
- 16. **Any Other Business** - CH reported that pay increases for support staff are still being negotiated and could be anything between 1% and 10%. A 2% pay increase has been offered but has been rejected by the union. Three different ways of increasing teachers' pay have been mooted, with one suggestion being a minimum salary of £30k; the amount of the increase is not yet known.

Dates of next meetings –

(Directors' and Members' Meetings at Richard Crosse, starting 8am)

Directors meetings: 8am on a Friday

27 March (Finance, Audit and Risk Committee)

1 May

19 June

10 July (with Members)

Members meetings: 8am on a Friday

10 July (with Directors)

LAG meetings: 4pm on a Monday

9 March 4pm at TH

22 June 4pm at SM

Signed.....

Colin Hopkins - Chair of Members

Date

Signed.....

Heather Bowman – Chair of Directors

Date

Item	Action to be taken	Action by whom	Action by when
5	Take the quiz (click on hyperlink)	Members and Directors	1 May
5	Christian distinctiveness to feature on Directors' meetings' agenda	PL/AH	1 May
6	Appoint Link Director for Reading	Directors	1 May
7	Send information on Coronavirus	JS to PL	13 March
13	H&S Report on AS to be sent to JS	PL	End March