

Minutes of Members' and Directors' Meeting 18 June 2021 8am via Google Meet

Attendees : Mr P Lovern (PL) (CEO), Ms C Gethin (CG) (CEO from September 2021), Rev Simon Davies (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 M Havelock-Crozier (MHC) (Vice-Chair of Directors), Mrs C Humphries (CH) (Director)

Also present up for Item 6: N Jarrett (NJ) (Head AS)

Also present for Item 7: J Wynn (JW) (Head SM)

Also present for Item 8: R Mills (RM) (Head TH)

Also present for Item 9: E Bowring (EB) (Head RC)

Also present up for Item 11: Ms S Cole (SCo) (Finance Manager)

Also present for Items 12 and 13: Mrs J Bowman (JBo) (Data Protection Officer, Business Operations Manager)

Clerk: Mrs A Howard (AH)

RC: Richard Crosse

SM: St Mary's

TH: The Howard

AS: Anson School

CPD: Continuing Professional Development

NPQH: National Professional Qualification for Headship

NPQEL: National Professional Qualification for Executive Leadership

EY: Early Years

RI: Requires Improvement

1. **Welcome, Prayer** - HB welcomed everyone to the meeting and SD led the Members and Directors in the prayer.
2. **Apologies** - Apologies had been received from Mr D Grewer (DG) (Member) and Mrs J Smith (JS) (Director). AH will update the attendance register.
3. **Pecuniary Interest** - There were no changes to the Pecuniary Interest Register.
4. **Minutes of last meeting** - Directors confirmed that the minutes of the meeting held on 14.5.21 are a true copy. The minutes will be signed by HB when the situation allows. Confidential items will be deleted from the public minutes and these will then be put on the website. PL reported that all actions have been completed or appear on this meeting's agenda.
5. **Welcome** - HB welcomed Charlene Gethin to the meeting; CG said she was looking forward to taking up the post of CEO from September and had already had very useful meetings with PL.
6. **Anson Update** - NJ joined the meeting to present her report on AS; this had already been distributed with the other HT's reports to Directors and Members. NJ explained that, having moved to be Headteacher at AS in September 2020, her priority was to form relationships with the children, parents and staff at the school. This was made more difficult by the Covid-19 situation, but feedback from parents showed that this had worked well; *confidential item*. There had been an upskilling of staff in the use of Google and the CPD training had been very useful, resulting in a greater input from staff, increased live and 1-to-1 teaching and positive feedback from parents during the second lockdown. The school website had been revamped, leading to an increased use by parents, and the use of blogs had proved popular.
NJ had introduced curriculum changes, to follow the MAT curriculum more closely, and a change to the teaching of Phonics was introduced in January which had been well-received.

Confidential item

In terms of positive outcomes, NJ listed her relationships within the school and the community and charity events; she praised the caring and generosity of the community. NJ added that the children

felt safe coming into school, standards remained high, a very positive School Review report had been received, AS gained a Quality Mark for Maths and English and NJ herself has embarked on gaining the NPQH qualification. Future plans include establishing a Forest School, setting up an outdoor classroom and outdoor area to make use of the beautiful grounds with funding from the PTFA, ensuring the development of new staff, developing the library, making closer links with the MAT and having specialist teachers in PE, Music and French.

HB agreed that AS has had a very good year, despite the difficulties of Covid, and PL said the School Review had highlighted the consistency and high quality of Teaching and Learning and the adoption of the TSSMAT approach. CBS asked whether the accreditation of a Quality Mark had had an impact on parents; NJ agreed that this would give parents more confidence in the school's teaching and it was good to get external acknowledgement of the school's achievements.

NJ thanked SD for his support of the school; SD said he had received excellent feedback from the community who were now getting used to the school's involvement in TSSMAT. NJ concluded by saying she was looking forward to September and CG thanked her for an excellent précis of the past year at AS. NJ was thanked for her report.

PL considered that NJ has really thrived since moving to AS as Headteacher.

7. **St Mary's Update** - JW joined the meeting to talk through his Headteacher's Report. He reported that he has had to close two 'bubbles' at school due to a positive lateral flow test, but was hoping a negative PCR test would now be received.

In his review of the year, JW considered that the children had coped really well with a difficult year, involving home learning. The staff were happy; they had worked very hard, but were positive and excited about the future.

In terms of positive outcomes, JW was happy to report that the recent School Review had validated that the children were well-behaved and hard-working. A focus during the last year has been on the school grounds, with a horticultural area for children to grow produce, together with a great deal of outdoor learning. The National tutoring programme has been used to enable Y6 children and other KS2 children to catch up; teachers and TAs have also been working hard to focus on vulnerable children and children who have not been able to work so well at home. An Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) has been assisting with outdoor sessions and every class has had access to outdoor teaching each week. JW praised a NQT teacher who joined SM this year: she has worked phenomenally hard despite the difficulties of remote learning and been a particular success. The staffing had been very strong, with a member of staff returning from maternity leave to work with the Class 4 teacher, an increase in TA hours and additional work from the ELSA and a member of staff working on NPQ Middle Leadership qualification.

PL praised the National Forest teacher training carried out at SM, with one student appointed to teach at RC from September.

Regarding future plans, JW planned to further develop the outdoor curriculum, increasing the space for the EY outdoors area. There are plans to install solar panels as part of the school's sustainability focus. The curriculum within school will also be developed and dance and drama sessions will be provided, ensuring a broad and balanced curriculum. JW continued to say that IT would be a big focus at the school over the coming year, with the introduction of Chromebooks. The SIAMS inspection is due, having been postponed from the start of lockdown; JW reported that daily/weekly worship has continued over the year, the vicar has been involved 'remotely' and the Christian ethos is still very much present.

With regards to data capture, JW said that specific children have been targeted for extra support, but the school has small cohorts with some challenging children needing nurture and support and this can affect the data. PL mentioned that testing is taking place in all the schools at present and data will be presented to Directors in September.

JW concluded by saying it had been a challenging year, but he thanked his amazing staff. CG thanked him for giving her a flavour of the school and she looked forward to visiting. PH asked about a pupil who had been very ill and JW said he was getting better and his treatment had gone well. CH asked JW about his external school work and JW confirmed that he had been working with

a group of Staffordshire Heads (S-HEADS) to visit each other's schools and give external validation; this had worked extremely well and the group provided a wealth of experience. School Heads were matched with Heads and schools of a different nature (locality, faith, gender, experience, academy/maintained). Although Covid lockdowns had prevented school visits, the group has continued to meet remotely and it is hoped they will be able to meet up again from September. JW reported that he is also part of a Rugeley Heads group, who provide a supportive network for the community in an area where new schools are being built.

JW was thanked for his report.

8. **The Howard Update** - RM was unable to be present at the start of this agenda item, so PL presented a review of the Headteacher's Report, saying that RM has done an amazing job at TH and also with the development of English across the MAT. The recent School Review had shown outstanding quality of Teaching and Learning, excellent presentation of children's work and a good school environment; PL considered that the school was now following the MAT way and although it had some challenges with regards to small cohorts, it was doing very well. The outcome of the bid for CIF money at the school was still awaited, but the PTA had secured sponsorship to pay for fencing, the EY play area and also for an insulated log cabin classroom with toilets, electricity and water which could be built in the trees depending on planning permission.

SC said everyone was thrilled with RM as Headteacher and with the school, she had received no adverse comments and everyone loved the school.

PL agreed that it was a fabulous team at TH, especially the teacher of Class 1 with R, Y1 and Y2 in one class where the children are making excellent progress. With an additional classroom, the PAN could be raised to 15, there could be 11 children in Nursery and the school would be enhanced. CG asked whether there was a break-even number of pupils needed in Nursery and PL agreed with her that even a small number of Nursery pupils would make a difference.

RM then joined the meeting and said all the staff had been working very hard; *confidential*. The National tutoring scheme had been a success and she was awaiting the data to see the impact of Covid on the pupils. RM had passed her NPQH and thanked everyone for their support in this; she felt it had had an impact on her leadership and enhanced her reflective skills, enabling her to get the best out of her staff and honing her skills. She was now thinking about studying for NPQEL. RM considered that Writing was good across the MAT and Reading was now well-embedded across all four schools.

With regards to future projects, RM planned to improve the outdoor areas, carry out induction for new staff and address gaps in pupils' learning. She considered that TH was in a good place and it was particularly important to be part of TSSMAT which had given invaluable support and strength especially during this last year.

HB thanked her for her report and hard work.

9. **Richard Crosse Update** - EB joined the meeting to present her report, saying that staff at RC had been working incredibly hard, carrying out assessments and plugging gaps in children's learning. The priority groups to target were EY, R, Y1 and Y2 who were the hardest hit by the online learning; staff were working with EY on fine motor skills and phonics. However, EB thought that tests would show a good improvement since spring, with good results in phonics. The National Tutoring Programme had been very useful, but unfortunately the Y5 tutor left in May and it had proved difficult to find another tutor. However, staff and a volunteer were working to boost this cohort.

Confidential item.

EB informed Members and Directors that work on an outside area for EY had been started with support from the PTA, with a music area and stage also planned. The PTA are also giving money to improve the nurture and spiritual area in school. The new Rector, Rev Jeremy Brading, has visited RC and was impressed by the work and knowledge of the children. EB feels that he will enhance the spiritual dynamic in the school and will be a real asset to the school, being keen to join Worship, invite the children into church and involve the community.

Two NQT teachers are joining the school in September, so a focus will be on developing and supporting new staff using the structure of the John Taylor Academy framework and releasing the

two mentors to give them time to work with the NQTs. Therefore, EB has decided not to take on students for the coming year.

Two part-time TAs are leaving this summer, including one who has worked for the school for many years and also plays the piano in school. It has been decided to appoint a full-time TA to replace them, who will also give some lunchtime support.

EB thanked everyone in TSSMAT for their support in her first year of Headship and feels that RC is in a good position.

PH asked whether there will be someone to play the piano at RC and EB said that the TA who is leaving has offered to come back into school to do this. He also asked whether EB had found it difficult to combine her role as SENCO with being Head; EB said it had been a challenge, but she had two SEN champions who helped with day-to-day problems and liaised with her and also EB was now delegating more work to the office staff. However, she still preferred to work on applications and referrals herself as she understood the system. *Confidential item*. The online platform for SENCO teaching and learning was now in place and made intervention easier to arrange.

EB was thanked for her report.

10. **CEO Report - The Budget 21/22** was discussed as part of the Finance Item 11.

Staffing for September - PL confirmed that an advert had been placed for a TA at RC. Two cooks had been appointed, following their temporary places as agency staff. One cook has been given extra hours to carry out some extra duties involving cookery lessons at SM and community involvement.

Priorities - IT continues to be a priority, but StaffsTech is being slow to provide all the information required. The outcomes of the CIF bids for funding the flat roof at SM and the heating system at TH are still awaited. Curriculum development, particularly in regard to post-Covid needs, is a focus. AS is now more in line with TSSMAT, including starting school at 8.30am which was put out to consultation and been agreed by parents, to start from September.

MAT growth - *Confidential item*

CEO induction - PL reported that CG had met with himself and HB at RC and there had been a comprehensive discussion, including TSSMAT vision and values, strategy and planning, staffing, school improvement plan, finance, GDPR, internal assurance, business, IT, HR, assessment. PL will take CG on a tour of the other three schools and further meetings are planned. CG agreed that it had been a thorough induction and she now felt much more in the loop. They had discussed the auditing process and PL said that the current auditing contract is to be reviewed in the autumn. He recommended continuing with Cooper Parry, the present auditors, as they are supportive, provide good training and are very thorough. PH considered that it was not unusual to have a second term with one set of auditors, especially to maintain continuity for the new CEO; however it was good practice to change auditors regularly. The Academy handbook recommends reviewing a change of auditors once every five years. CH offered to meet with CG to discuss HR issues, before the MAT training at the end of the summer holidays. Also as part of induction, PL discussed governance with CG, as there are or will be vacancies with Directors and Members; however, it is hoped the new Rector in Kings Bromley will join the Members.

11. **Finance - Budget 21/22** - SCo joined the meeting and gave a short update on the budget 21/22, with some small changes concerning staffing where vacancies have been filled. There is now a slight increase in the surplus to £12k. The outturn for this year has been slightly changed, which affects the budget for next year, but it is still a positive picture. With regards to the 3-year budget, there is still a positive position for the first couple of years; 23/24 is showing an in-year deficit but the financial position is likely to change before then. PL thanked SCo for her hard work and said TSSMAT was in a much stronger position and CG would find she had a strong team to work with.
- Management Accounts P9** - SCo said that little had changed over the past month. The surplus had increased to £57k, which was £9k ahead of budget. The outturn is £82k, £7k over budget; AS, RC and particularly SM are showing surpluses, with TH showing a slight deficit. At SM, two members of staff have been on maternity leave, one returned in April and one is due back in August. TH has

received a rural connectivity grant. Staffing costs are over budget, agency costs have increased the cost of supply and an extra £4k has been spent on laptops.

With regards to KPIs, SCo is working on RAG (Red, Amber, Green) ratings, making comparisons with similar schools with regards to budgets and will present the information at the next meeting. CBS advised that it was difficult to provide perfect information and it was better to use it as a basis for discussion and as a useful tool; CG said the problem lay with inaccurate information on the government dashboard.

The Cash Balance showed a £442k balance, with an in-year surplus of £57k and a total of Revenue Reserves of £261k.

Cash Flow - The bank balance was projected to be £440k and is really healthy, with a carry-forward bank balance of £443k.

Remissions and Charges - SCo proposed that school meal costs should be increased in September from £2.50 to £2.60 and Care Club costs be raised slightly within 2-2.5%. This was agreed by Directors and Members present.

CIF bids - Outcomes of these bids are awaited.

12. Policy Updates - JBo joined the meeting.

The following policies had been sent to Directors to review:

Administering Medication - Art - Asset Disposal and Write off - Charges and Remissions - Debt Recovery - Investment - Physical Restraint - Security - Spiritual - Teaching and Learning - Use of Photographs and Images. Also: Health & Safety Policies - Anson, Richard Crosse, St Mary's, The Howard.

CBS proposed slight changes to the Health and Safety Policies, also combining the Debt Recovery and Asset Disposal and Write off Policies and a slight change to the Art Policy. Directors ratified the Policies subject to the slight changes proposed.

13. Cyber Security Review - JBo stated that a lot of work had gone into this Review, establishing a Register of software and apps, a Risk Assessment, work on school information and GDPR mapping and an IT Asset Register which will audit the movement of IT resources within schools. There will be a disposal of some laptops, with a certificate to confirm this. JBo recommended that Board ownership of the Cyber Security Review should be discussed at the next meeting, with actions for Directors included. This will be an agenda item. PH asked about a Penetration test and offered to ask another company about consulting on this; JBo said that would be useful and she will also contact another company suggested by CH.

14. Any other business - AH confirmed that the next meeting will be 9 July and Directors welcomed CG's suggestion that she will attend this. There was a discussion on meeting dates for next year and CG will consult with JBo on this. AH asked whether meetings next year will continue by Google Meet or be face-to-face and it was agreed that CG will arrange a mixture of online/in person meetings, with the first meeting of the academic year in person.

Dates of next meetings –

Directors' meetings: 8am on a Friday

9 July by Google Meet

LAG meetings: 4pm on a Wednesday

23 June 4pm by Google Meet

Signed..... Date

Heather Bowman - Chair of Directors

Signed..... Date

Simon Davis - Member

Item	Action to be taken	Action by whom	Action by when
11	To present RAG data	SCo	9.7.21
13	To put Cyber Security Review on agenda	AH	9.7.21
13	To contact companies regarding Penetration test	PH/JBo	9.7.21
14	To list dates of Directors, Members and LAG meetings 2021-22:	CG/JBo	9.7.21