

MINUTES OF THE DIRECTORS MEETING

30 September, 8am, Richard Crosse

Attendees:	Mrs Heather Bowman (HB) (Chair of Directors) Mrs Jacqui Bowman (JBo) ((Data Protection Officer and Business Operations Manager) Mr Charles Bradshaw-Smith (CBS) (FAR Chair and Director) Mrs Sue Cockayne (SC) (Director) Ms Shanie Cole (SCo) (Finance Manager) Mrs Charlene Gethin (CG) (CEO and Director) Mr Peter Halifax (PH) (Vice Chair of Directors) Mrs Melanie Havelock-Crozier (MHC) (Vice-Chair of Directors) Mrs Caroline Humphries (CH) (Director)
Apologies: Not in attendance:	Mrs Angela Burns (AB) (Director) Mr Kevin Borg (KB) (Director)
Also in attendance:	Emma Bowring (EB) (Headteacher of The Richard Crosse CofE Primary School - RC) Miss Nicola Jarrett (NJ) (Headteacher of Anson CofE Primary School - AP) Rachel Mills (RM) (Headteacher of The Howard Primary School - HP) Jonathan Wynn (JW) (Headteacher of The St. Mary's CofE Primary School - MP) Sid Slater (National Leader of Governance) Sue Searle (Clerk) and Lisa Canton (Clerk)
Documents circulated prior to the meeting	Minutes from 8.7.22 CEO report Director cycle overview St Marys SIAMS report Full suite of attainment data including year on year trends 2022 2023 AMP plan Directors code of conduct to review DPO report Policies for Review Headteachers reports: <i>The Howard, Anson Primary</i> , Richard Crosse and <i>St. Mary's</i>

The meeting started at **8.00 am.** and was declared quorate. All responses were given by CG unless otherwise stated.

	A	Reference and		
	Agenda Item Title	Minutes		
1	Prayer	All were welcomed to the meeting by CG and introductions were made. CG opened the meeting with a prayer.		
2	Apologies	Apologies were received and accepted from Mrs Angela Burns (AB) and Mr. K. Borg (KB) PH informed that he had to leave the meeting at 9.30 am.		
3	Pecuniary Interest and Statements of Assurance	No changes were declared and CG confirmed that the Pecuniary Interest and Statements of Assurance registers had been updated.		
4.	Minutes from the last Directors meeting 08/07/2022	HB asked for confirmation that all had seen and read the Minutes and asked whether there were any further matters arising. Non were declared. Action: That the Minutes of the Directors meeting held on 8th July 2022 be approved as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair. Minute Update		

		3. Provide information on top-slicing SCo	from 30/9/22 – Completed at the FAR meeting 23/07/2022	
		3. Review payments to staff in the case of closure, including TUPE SCo/CH/JBo	End autumn term – ongoing	
		3. Card expenses CBS	during summer holidays – to be arranged	
		6. Check signal strength at TH JBo/HT	22/7/22 – Completed at the FAR meeting 23/07/2022	
		6. Keep in touch with Staffs Tech PH	over summer holidays – ongoing: PH awaiting a response	
		6. Attend interview for cook at TH PH/MHC/SC	3-4/10/22 – Thanks were given to CH for her work on organising the interviews. The deployment was a success. CG to speak to RM to confirm that the dates reserved for interviews are no longer required.	
		6. Confirm attendance at Inset Day Directors	Completed	
		6. Complete Director skills audit Directors	Completed	
		14. Review Safeguarding information Directors	Completed	
		15. Liaise on ordering and installing Wi-Fi PH/SCo/JBo	Completed	
5.1	5.1 Headteachers PresentationsEB joined the meeting to present her report on Richard Crosse via a Teams video 8.09am. All responses were given by EB unless otherwise stated.			
			r 6 Reading results being especially good. This pupils and supporting them in their understanding of	
		• Lunchtimes were no longer in split sessions; there were now more staff with one sitting in the hall for Year 5 and Year 6 too. Children of different age groups could now eat together and mix which was a positive development.		
		• Standon Bowers residential visit for children had been a resounding success and children across the four schools were able to mix. Behaviour from the children had been impeccable. However, it had been tiring for staff and EB suggested that it would probably be appropriate to move future residentials to a date towards the end of half term.		
		CBS asked whether pupils had had other opportunities to form relationships outside of their age groups. There were many other opportunities such as Egyptian Day, sports tournaments and the choir. Mixing across year groups was viewed as being beneficial to the pupils.		
		The new Teaching Assistant (TA) had been a particular asset to the school and had forr good relationships with the pupils.		
		EB's National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH) was ongoing. Meeting other headteachers from around the country had proven to be an invaluable networking experience. The review and feedback received from CG had been taken into considerati and the school were trying to reduce staff workload. A well-being area for staff had been created and a hands-off marking sheet had been designed for trialling.		

	The Multi-Faith Trail would take place on Monday 3 rd October in Derby.
	(See Confidential Minutes Part 2)
	The Directors thanked EB for her report who responded that she felt supported by CG and the Board.
	EB left the call at 8.25 am.
2	RM joined the meeting to present her report on The Howard via a Teams video call at 8.25 am. All responses were given by RM unless otherwise stated.
	The school had been involved with the church doing voluntary work in the grounds and there had been a whole school project creating an outside classroom, the grand opening of which would be on 2 nd November at 2.30 pm.
	Three new families had joined the school.
	The Parents Forum had been a huge success and Directors were advised to look at the link on the report. The disco on Friday 23 rd September had raised nearly £600. CBO stated that this reflected how keen the community were to support RM and the school and CG agreed.
	Reading results were pleasing; staff had taken on board the new initiative to drive reading forwards. The Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCT) pupils had made really good progress. Only three pupils who had joined in Year 5 or 6 hadn't met expectations. One of the pupils had received support through the National Tutoring Programme (NTP) but a lack of time had impeded progress. Writing would be a key focus for the forthcoming year.
	CG congratulated RM on the success of the results and acknowledged the challenges that this had involved. CH stated that the movement of staff across the Trust had worked well and that strategies to further pupil progress were strongly in place.
	CG thanked RM for her review and further noted that HP had the lowest persistent absence figures across the Trust.
	Governors thanked RM for her report.
	RM left the call at 8.39 am.
3	NJ joined the meeting to present her report on Anson Primary via a Teams video call at 8.39 am. All responses were given by NJ unless otherwise stated.
	Questions arising from the report were sought by NJ who asked for Directors to focus on data from Year 1.
	Last year had been challenging, particularly with staffing issues at the end of last year. However, staff had now built a stronger team which provided support for each other. The Parent, Teacher and Friends Association (PTFA) had been pro-active and provided great support last year and significant funds had been raised. Governing involvement had been really positive with Directors coming into school and five reviews from Link Governors had been received. Upskilling Middle Leaders was a key priority.
	(See Confidential Minutes Part 2)
	PH Challenged: What is in place for the Year 3 cohort to enable them move forwards? <i>Response: The NTP is available until December. Three children are unable to access the curriculum and they will require additional intervention and a re-visit of subject areas to address skill and knowledge gaps.</i>
	CG acknowledged that AP's three-year trends were usually outstanding and that last year's
	results were an anomaly.

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		PH asked what the Board could learn from this dip in results. CG responded that recruitment was a key factor, and there is a need to delve deeper when appointing new staff. CH agreed that it will be prudent to review the recruitment procedure. NJ agreed that this would be useful.
		CG acknowledged the exceptional level of teamwork at AP: the nursery had just received an outstanding Ofsted award.
		A review of the timing of the end of year residential trip had taken place due to the potential for loss of children's learning at a crucial time. As a consequence the trip will take place earlier in the academic year in 2023.
		The Directors congratulated NJ for passing her NPQH and thanked her for her report. CG informed Directors that the Scheme of Delegation for the Governing Committee would be reviewed the following week with a view to amending delegations as the Local Governing Board at AP was strong and keen to take more on.
		NJ left the call at 8.58 am.
		JW joined the meeting in person to present his report on St. Mary's at 8.59 am. All responses were given by JW unless otherwise stated.
4		There had been a significant amount of positive changes at MP. The staffing structure had changed with three and a half new teachers taking on new positions.
		CG reported that she had been to the school the previous day to conduct learning walks and had observed that each new teacher brought new skills. These teachers came from schools within the MAT. CH agreed that stability across the MAT had been maintained with these changes in staffing.
		Behaviour was good; the Statutory Inspection for Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) journey had helped to embed good behaviour and the subsequent report had been excellent.
		CG reported that levels of scrutiny at the school were good.
		There was now an improved level of governance and the School Development Plan (SDP) was being reviewed. The focus on History (led by JW) and its embedding in the curriculum was continuing and the school is to work towards a Quality Assurance Award.
		Spelling was ongoing. The 'Daily Spellings' drive was proving successful alongside the 'Spelling Bee' as a MAT-wide initiative. Lost grades in grammar tests were attributed to the spelling element of the tests and the school aims to improve on this.
		IT provision was ongoing and there was potential for more training for staff which CG had now booked.
		Writing development targeted particular children with a focus on high quality intervention. Stamina in writing was important and more opportunities to write were necessary to aid metacognition.
		CSB asked whether this was a national scheme. It was being rolled out nationally and would be quality assured across the MAT.
		Outdoor education was now embedded in the curriculum; the loss of outdoor play and socialisation during Covid-19 had impacted on pupils and there were some who now needed emotional support.
		CH asked whether there was an Emotional Literary Support Assistant (ELSA) at the school.
		A Higher-Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) had received training which was regularly updated and acts as a mentor for other staff. Parents had come into school to report any

concerns about the well-being of their child and the HLTA had provided an excellent first
level of support.
CG acknowledged that this was a positive approach in regard to supporting children's mental health.
MHC asked whether the school had heard from the Diocese regarding the recruitment of a Vicar. An interim Vicar had been appointed.
There were currently 90 pupils on roll with 8 children currently in Nursery. It is hoped that this will rise to 15 following the January and Easter intakes. Demand for places in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 was high. Directors agreed that this was an incredible turnaround from three years ago and that this would hopefully be sustained through recommendation and publicity. It was acknowledged by all that the unique selling point of the school, its community and Church setting, had helped to promote interest.
The data was pleasing with Key Stage 2 showing some anomalies. One child had made good progress at an individual level rather than at expected level, and one child was a <i>greater depth</i> learner where expectation had been high; with such a small cohort, pupils were at the lower end of <i>expected</i> throughout.
Key Stage 1 data, including Writing and Phonics, had been consistently good for a number of years.
CG expressed her gratitude to JW for his work on attendance and MHC seconded this. Children gained a strong foundation at MP and this could be seen in their transition to secondary school.
JW was thanked by all for his report.
JW left the meeting at 8.58 am.
Due to time constraints, PH presented an IT update at this point.
IT Infrastructure and Chromebook update (Item 11: Estates, facilities and infrastructure (Inc. IT) Environmental impact and decarbonisation plans).
Projected costs for the IT infrastructure had increased due to a lack of available access points and the heat maps were awaited. Commitment to the project would result in an overspend. JBo hoped to receive the revised costs imminently. With regard to Chromebooks, parents needed to be aware that they would be buying the Chromebooks from a company as opposed to the school and a suitably worded letter had been sent to Parents making this clear.
CBS asked about insurance and JBo responded that the MAT was insured against parents defaulting on payment and insurance against the company ceasing to trade. PH confirmed that the project was a low risk having conducted relevant company checks which were satisfactory. JBo added that parents would pay an all-inclusive price of £260.
For those children whose parents did not want to take part in the scheme, the children would be able to use school Chromebooks (they will need to share with other pupils) but at present would not be able to take them home.
South Staffs Tech had been slow to respond. The results of the penetration test had been sent but no reply had been received over the summer. PH would arrange a meeting with South Staffs Tech to follow this up.
Action: That a meeting be arranged with South Staffs Tech to discuss the results of the penetration test.
PH and Sue Searle left the meeting at 9.29 am.

6.	CEO Report	The CEO asked for questions regarding the report and stated that specific items would be
		outlined for the minutes.

Relevant actions from previous meeting

Safeguarding Review (see Minute No. 4/14 from last Directors meeting): CG expressed her gratitude to Directors in regard to their input on this. A decision had been made to go ahead with training although it was felt, in retrospect, that the course was not ideal. It would, however, ensure that all had received full Safeguarding training.

CH expressed concern that new staff would not be able to understand the course without a context. CG responded that the headteachers could lead the training in the next academic year. CH suggested delivering a recorded version which staff could then readily access for guidance. CG replied that alternative courses would be looked at for the future before we recruit new Governors.

Internal auditors *(see Minute No. 3/6 from last Directors meeting)* had been approved. Directors were advised to consult the FAR minutes 23rd September 2022 for decisions taken. A meeting for Trust Assurance Framework would be made post meeting.

Action: That a meeting regarding the Trust Assurance Framework be arranged.

<u>3. People Development and management</u> There would be an upcoming consultation on term dates and CG's appraisal date would be set post meeting.

The coverage on recruitment of staff had been widespread and CG expressed that she was pleased with this. CG would look into training around equality, inclusion and diversity and this may form a target for 2023/2024 as it was something for staff and governance. There was a further need to consider equity between staff in terms of pay and TLRs (Teaching and Learning Responsibilities). One teacher was still being paid for a TLR for which they were no longer responsible, CG had worked with the member of staff and Headteacher to ensure the requirements of the TLR were met and other leaders to explain how discrepancy is managed. CH felt that this should be reviewed.

Action: Look into possibilities for training around equality.

<u>4. Organisational Development and management</u> (*MAT assurance framework audit: Part 1 - Vision, culture and ethos and Growth Strategy*)

Two primary schools had expressed an interest in becoming a part of the MAT. CG and HB had liaised with the governors of one school and initial due diligence is being undertaken. With regard to the second enquiry, CH will facilitate a meeting between the Headteacher and CG so further discussions can take place.

Action: That Introductions be made between CG and the Headteacher of the second interested primary school.

Governance development to date was discussed to strengthen accountability.

A meeting with all of the headteachers had taken place to discuss how the Board had impacted on their school. Directors were advised to go into their respective schools to see the English and Maths links before writing up their scrutiny reports. This would form part of quality assurance for CG alongside CG's oversight from the headteachers' reports and needed to be undertaken until a LGC was in place.

A pupil and staff voice audit would be rolled out in two weeks' time as part of a wellbeing and safeguarding survey which would include child-on-child abuse. This was all in place.

CH expressed here concerns about the pace of change and its impact on staff, and in particular, on headteachers. CG responded that the HSE survey headteachers completed was very positive in terms of all areas, especially change management. The development of roles and responsibilities and delegations was the main area to consider and this had already started and time was already booked to continue this work. Headteachers were ready and needed to take the lead on changes but that it would be worth considering delegating some of their responsibilities to leaders in their schools and to look further at

		leadership structures in schools, including Deputies. EB advertising for a deputy headteacher would also be considered.
		CH reiterated her concern as to the pace of change being sustainable and CG responded that the leadership structure could not be changed at present due to finances but that capacity had been discussed and planned spend of finances in preparation for growth had been considered. A discussion evolved around the implications of another staffing issue and pressure on staff. CG outlined that the Scheme of Delegation is being revisited with Leaders to relieve pressure on staff and identify overlaps in workload on the Trust Board and further stated that the headteachers were not concerned about the imposed changes.
Action: That Administration, Estates Management and the Scheme of Delegation reviewed to relieve pressure on staff and identify overlaps in workload on the True		
		In response to a question about how Governors are recruited, CG responded that some are asked directly but that more information regarding recruitment needed to go out in the schools' newsletters and was being prepared.
		Action: That all recruitment materials be completed and an induction pack for new Governors be developed. Recruitment of Governors will be advertised in newsletters.
		The Directors thanked CG for her report.
		A break in proceedings was declared at 10.11 am.
		The meeting resumed at 10.16 am.
7.	Finance	P1 Management Accounts – update: SCo asked if the Directors had any questions regarding the Finance Report. There were no questions arising and SCo stated that finances overall were healthy. Audit – update: that audit had been consistent KPI RAG data – update: see report Gift Register and Charge Card expenses – update: Action: CBS to complete
8.	Risk	CG stated that the Risk Register was up to date.
	Management	
9.	Data Protection	<u>DPR Report</u> – update: JBo shared that a Data Protection Officer report had been completed at three schools. AP had been postponed. <u>Board Annual Data Protection Training</u> – update: JBo had sent out training. Directors were advised that they should all have looked at the PowerPoint and watched the video.
		Action: Look at the PowerPoint and watch the video training on Data Protection.
		DP Risk Register – update: that there were no changes.
10.	Policy Updates	Directors were advised to see the circulated Policies for Review document for updates. Allegations Against Staff Behaviour & Discipline Complaints Disciplinary Grievance Child on Child Abuse Pay

		Conduct. Changes had also been made to the naming of The Small Schools Multi-Academy
		Trust to The South Staffordshire Multi-Academy Trust in the Code of Conduct.
11.	Estates, facilities and infrastructure (Inc. IT)	SCo advised that all schools had been visited in relation to the CIF bids and sought Director approval for their submission to the ESFA. Directors unanimously agreed with SCo going ahead with the bid.
	Environment al impact and decarbonisati	A Finance, Audit and Resources (FAR) meeting (23/09/2022) update was given at this point by CBS due to time constraints.
	on plans	Finances were in good shape.
		 Priorities had been placed upon internal audits Estates were considered to be the largest financial risk A renewable energy audit had been completed following which renewable suggestions had been presented. Hybrid appeared to be the best option but under Salix funding rules, hybrid systems were not allowed. This was disappointing as the project can no longer go ahead.
		• The next step was to look at structural surveys for the roofs. RC has been offered financial support by the RC Trust for a structural survey. This was a priority
		SCo added that there was potentially a Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) for each of the schools and therefore it might not be viable to start work before summer 2023. The Chair suggested obtaining quotes for the roof for RC in advance and CG responded that she had contacted the Diocese who are responsible for their own land and will give Brian's Balls contact details to the CBS.
		Action: That Brian Ball's contact number be passed on to CBS
		CBS left the meeting at 10.28am.
		<u>Accident reporting</u> – update: this was now in place and would be rolled out on the upcoming inset day, the 31 st October. Headteachers had been informed of the necessary steps.
		IT strategy - ongoing Next steps - ongoing AMP – ongoing
12.	Health and Safety	Accident reports have been updated. No further updates were declared.
13.	Safeguarding	Update: That the Single Central Record would be monitored today by CG and MHC.
		Action: That the Single Central Record will be monitored post meeting.
14.	People Development	Includes:
	and	Human Resources
	Management	Recruitment and Retention CPD
		Capacity and Succession planning
		Wellbeing Partnerships
		CG informed that Headteachers' have proposed that we could offer time off in lieu ahead of a residential and had brought the matter to the Board for approval. All agreed that time off in lieu of residentials be approved for this member of staff and for subsequent requests of this nature.
		In response to CG's suggestion that this be made transparent in the Staff Handbook, CH stated that having a short conversation with staff regarding time off in lieu might provide a

		better way forward. negotiated time.	JBo offered to send out a	a questionnaire to TAs and tea	chers regarding	
		Action: Send out a	staff consultation to TAs	and teachers regarding negot	iated time.	
15.	Organisation al Development and Management/ Vision, Culture Ethos/Christi an Distinctivene ss / Growth	No further updates were declared.				
16.	Leadership Development and Management/ Governance	Skills Audit MAT Assurance Framework – update (see Minute No. 6)				
 17. Any other business The Directors discussed the possibilities of administrative was agreed that costs for hiring support would be look financial reserves. Action: Look into the possibility of administrative support Dates for the sessions with link Governors and school going to three different schools. The following dates was agreed that costs for the sessions with link for the following dates was agreed that costs for hiring support would be look financial reserves. 			Id be looked into in conjunction ative support for the central tea nd schools were discussed wit	n with the Boards am.		
		Link Governor	School	Date]	
		MHC SC	SM HP	18 th October 2022 (morning) 18 th October 2022 (afternoon)		
		MHC and CBS	AP – English and Maths	18 th October 2022 (afternoon)		
		Action: SC to check dates of the link meetings with RM.				
		Action: That CG se	nd Directors a programn	ne of suggested questions to a	sk.	
		CG's Performance Management review date was arranged for the afternoon of Thursday 16th November at 2 pm. with CH and HB.				
		The date for the MA	T audit would be 13th O	ctober with the Chair and Dire	ctors.	
		Action: CH to circul	ate an updated docume	nt to remind Directors of these	dates.	
		The next Directors n	neeting will be <u>Friday 25</u>	th November 8.00am at Richa	rd Crosse.	
		The meeting closed	11.03am.			

Signed..... Date

Actions for items carried over from the Directors meeting 8/07/202

ltem	Action to be taken	Action by whom	Action by when
3	Review payments to staff in the case of closure, including TUPE	SCo/CH/JBo	End autumn term - ongoing
3	Update card expenses	CBS	To be arranged
6	Keep in touch with Staffs Tech	PH	Ongoing: PH awaiting a response

Action Log for the Directors Meeting 30/09/2022

ltem	Action to be taken	Action by whom	Action by when	
4	Sign off and file the Minutes of the previous Directors Meeting 08/07/2022	HB/Clerk	Post Meeting	
4.6	Confirm with Rachel that the dates reserved for interviews for a cook are no longer required.	CG	Post meeting	
6	Arrange a meeting with South Staffs Tech	PH	Post meeting	
6	Arrange a meeting regarding the insurance of the Trust framework	CG	Post meeting	
6	Look into training around equality, inclusion and diversity.	CG	Post meeting	
6	Introduce CG to the Headteacher of the primary school regarding inclusion in the MAT.	СН	Post meeting	
6	Send out an audit of the strengths and areas of each school to the Directors (and used for LGC)	CG	Post meeting	
6	That Administration, Estates Management and the Scheme of Delegation be reviewed	CG/All	Next meeting	
6	That a recruitment and induction pack for new Governors be created and recruitment of Governors will be advertised in newsletters.	CG	Open	
6	Arrange a meeting regarding the assurance of the Trust framework		Post meeting	
7	Complete Gift Register and Charge Card expenses	CBS	Post meeting	
9	Look at the PowerPoint and video training on Data Protection.	ALL	Post meeting/Priority	
11	Give Brian Ball's contact number to CBS regarding roof surveys	CG	Post meeting	
12	Monitor the Single Central Record	CG/MHC	30/09/2022	
14	Send out a staff consultation to TAs and teachers regarding negotiated time.	JBo	Post meeting	
17	Look into administrative support for central team	CH, SCo and CG	Post meeting	
17	Check the date of the link meetings with RM	SC	Post meeting	
17	Send Directors a programme of questions to ask at link meetings	CG	Post meeting	
17	Circulate a reminder of dates to Directors	СН	Post meeting	