

## THE MAST ACADEMY TRUST



Meeting	Venue	Time	Date
Trust board	Scissett Middle School	6.30pm	Wednesday 20 <sup>th</sup> March 2024

DFE	10357163
-----	----------

Start of meeting	18:34pm
Close of meeting	21:05pm

Attendance	77%
------------	-----

Present		In attendance	
Name	Role	Name	Role
Philip Marshall	Chair of Trustees	Sorrel Hellewell	Clerk
Tim Wade	Trustee	Natasha Greenough	CEO
Liz Godman	Trustee	Jason Field	CFO
Philip Oldfield	Trustee	Melanie Humphreys	Executive Lead: Governance, People & Communications
Jayne Done	Trustee	Andrew Hancox	Headteacher at Scholes Junior & Infant School
Dorcas Atkinson	Trustee	Stewart Harper	ACG Consultant
Ben Lunt	Trustee	Absent with Consent	
		Name	Role
		David Webster	Trustee
		Anthony Wilkinson	Trustee
		Absent without Consent	
		Name	Role

Item	Minutes
------	---------

35 Apologies for absent and consent	<p>Mr Marshall welcomed Mr Harper and Mr Hancox to the Trust Board meeting.</p> <p>RESOLVED: Apologies with consent were received from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• David Webster – Trustee</li> <li>• Anthony Wilkinson – Trustee</li> </ul>
36 Declarations of interest	RESOLVED: There were no declarations of interest.
37 Confidentiality reminder	Trustees were reminded by the Chair of Trustees that a Trustee role is confidential, and all information and documentation shared should be treated as such.
38 Presentation	<p>Mr Marshall noted Scholes Junior &amp; Infant School have recently joined the Trust and there has been good progress made.</p> <p>Mr Hancox presented ‘Scholes (Holmfirth) Junior &amp; Infant School’ slides and gave a brief explanation regarding their journey on joining the Mast:</p> <p><u>Slide 1 ‘Who are we?’</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are 179 pupils and 29 staff on role.</li> <li>• The school has a supportive PTA (FOSS) and close links with the local community.</li> <li>• There are extensive school grounds.</li> <li>• Parents are very supportive.</li> </ul> <p><u>Slide 2 ‘A brief history of Scholes’</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr Hancox went through the timeline and noted the Mast Academy Trust is a good Trust to be a part of.</li> </ul> <p><u>Slide 3 ‘Our KIND values’</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scholes JI School values were discussed and noted they are similar to the Trust’s.</li> </ul> <p><u>Slide 4 ‘School Improvement – Autumn 2022 and Spring/Summer 2023’</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Autumn 2022 a new headteacher started, a new curriculum was brought into the school, expectations were raised and the school received the DfE academisation notification.</li> <li>• In Spring/Summer 2023 the school received notification of their Trust sponsor and received the DfE connect the classroom grant. Intensive support was given and the school felt they became part of the Trust prior to joining.</li> </ul>

Slide 5 'School Improvement – Autumn 2023 and Spring/Summer 2024'

- In Autumn 2023 a new phonics scheme was introduced, peer reviews took place, academisation happened on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2023. The school continued to use current systems but were introduced to new systems.
- In Spring/Summer 2024 the school left the local authority, an IT upgrade took place, standard review and monitoring visits have taken place. The support from the Trust regarding the MSR (Managing Staff Reduction) process has been excellent.

Slide 6 'The Road goes on'

For Summer 2024 and beyond:

- The staff reduction process will be concluded by summer term.
- The new catering contract will start on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024, which is the same as the other schools within the Trust.
- There will be further school improvement and financial planning.
- There will be strengthening of the local governing body.

Mr Hancox noted the school are proud to be part of the Mast Academy Trust.

Q: How have parents reacted to the school joining the Trust?

A: A letter was created and sent out to all parents and there was only one parent who asked about the change and what is to be expected. An explanation was given to the parent. Welcome events took place for parents and the school are trying to encourage parents to come into school more.

Q: How have staff reacted to the change from when they were told about joining the Trust to now when the school has joined the Trust?

A: When the new headteacher started, staff morale was low but staff were tasked to try and find as many quick wins as possible. Staff are starting to understand the benefits to the children and school that come with joining the Trust.

Q: There has been work on absence management, are staff more on board and has staff absence reduced?

A: Before the school joined the Trust there were a lot of short-term absences but since joining the Trust and staff have read the absence policy, absence rates have lowered and staff come back to work much quicker than they previously have.

Q: How have the children handled the change with the school joining the Trust?

Item	Minutes
	<p>A: The children have taken it in their stride and pupil feedback has been positive. They have noticed there is more going on around school and the biggest change is the lanyards.</p> <p>Mrs Done had a tour of the school by year 6 and children noted the changes from early years and positive it is.</p> <p>Q: Why were you and other staff reluctant to join a Trust?  A: There has been negative feedback from other schools who have joined a different Trusts and they noted they never saw the Trust team in person etc. All staff at Scholes have stayed since joining the Trust.</p> <p>Q: Have the thoughts and attitudes from staff changed now the school have joined the Trust?  A: Initially some staff were hesitant and asked questions around certain decisions that were made but staff were spoken to noting these changes would have had to have taken place whether the school stayed with the local authority or moved to a Trust.</p> <p>Q: What are the key and upcoming challenges for the school and is there any support you need from the Trust?  A: There are several upcoming challenges around the curriculum, financial challenge and new staffing structure. The school is already receiving a lot of support from the Trust and understands the support will continue. Changes need to be made to sustain as a school.</p> <p>Mrs Greenough thanked Mr Hancox for his resilience in joining the Trust and his positivity he has shown.</p> <p>Trustees noted their thanks to Mr Hancox for his presentation.</p>
39 Representation	Mr Marshall noted there is one vacancy currently on the Trust Board but the Trust are not actively looking for a current new Trustee.
40 Notifications of items to be brought up under any other business	<p>RESOLVED: There was one item brought up under any other business.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chair of governors position at Scholes Junior &amp; Infant School</li> </ul>
41 Minutes for the meetings on 13 <sup>th</sup> December 2023	RESOLVED: All agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 13 <sup>th</sup> December 2023 are approved as a true record of the meetings.
42 Matters arising	

Item	Minutes
------	---------

	Minute Reference	Action
43	Organisation updates from collaborative team	<p>The following documents were provided prior to the meeting for Trustee consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CEO and collaborative team report – March 2024</li> <li>• Academic year 23_24 TIP summary_Spring</li> </ul> <p>Mrs Greenough noted the following points;</p> <p><u>Executive summary</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding letters have been received.</li> <li>• The pension grant is around £30,000 short.</li> <li>• The Trust are having to do more regular forecasting as finances remain a challenge.</li> <li>• The SRMSA is starting imminently.</li> <li>• Predications on outcomes at Scholes JI are high.</li> <li>• There are two-year groups that are weaker cohorts and work needs to be done.</li> <li>• Year six teaching at Scholes JI has been noted to be very strong.</li> <li>• The Trust welcomes the new Head of Estates who started their post on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March and has already made a positive start.</li> <li>• The new HR Partner will be joining the Trust full time from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024.</li> <li>• The new Headteacher at Shelley First School has been appointed and will be starting their post from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April.</li> </ul> <p>RESOLVED: All Trustees ratify and approve the appointment of the new headteacher at Shelley First School.</p> <p><u>Current challenges within the Trust</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It has been noted EHCP and high needs funding will be divided into clusters into Hubs from September. The way this is going to be managed is a potential risk.</li> </ul> <p>Mrs Greenough noted herself, Mr Field and Mr Marshall had a meeting with the DfE and the DfE noted they will continue to be supportive to the Trust. They wanted to see the Trust’s strategic plan which was sent to them and they recognise the Trust is a strong Trust and want to work with them in the future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are noticeable falling birth rates in the first schools.</li> <li>• The middle schools are full for year 6 in September and Kirkburton Middle School has been asked to take some additional children in year 7 which is positive.</li> </ul> <p><u>School standards</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Term one data shows phonics continues to be strong.</li> </ul>

- Key Stage one continues to be strong and Key stage two shows a slight decline. Key stage 2 children were lower on entry but targets remain in place and won't be lowered.
- Attendance continues to be high but is an area of focus.

Mrs Greenough noted the leadership structure within the middle schools is being looked at to ensure maximum capacity under the principles of best value.

#### Finance update

Mr Field noted the following points:

- The Trust's reserves remain in a strong position.
- Finance and pupil numbers will be discussed further in the focus item of the meeting.
- The Kreston Reeves report was shared with the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.
- Finance & Operation meetings have been taking place at all the schools over the last two weeks. These meetings have been useful and it's the start of budget setting rounds.
- There is a MSR process taking place at Scholes JI School and there have been similar discussions at other schools within the Trust.
- The Trust are sensitive to the morale of headteachers when dealing with MSR and the Trust will help make decisions alongside the headteacher.
- The Trust have written to the professional bodies regarding how much the recent grant is short. They have responded positively and noted other Trusts have also contacted them with the same issue.

Q: Does the data indicate any significant variation in the amount or focus of work for the middle school teams post transition with children from Trust / Non-Trust First Schools. If so, is the data indicating that the two feeder routes may need separating in certain / specific areas in order that progress towards this overall objective can be specifically reviewed?

A: School data has been shared with the Education & People Committee. The Middle Schools, First Schools and the high school all meet termly. A colleague within the Trust is now co-chairing these meeting to continue a positive relationship. The middle schools have offered free maths mastery training and have set up network sessions for all to attend. A discussion has also taken place regarding having a SENDCo network.

Mr Marshall noted the DfE Minister has picked up that Trust Boards should be discussing attendance more.

Q: Has the Trust been able to identify causes of low attendance?

A: A lot of absence children are disadvantaged or SEND children. Work takes place with families and guidance is broken down and each school has a personalised approach. The personalised

approach is currently a challenge due to capacity. Attendance within the Trust is above national average but it could be better.

Mr Marshall noted an open discussion with the DfE took place regarding the Trust taking on more small schools to help turn them around but there could be some financial challenges that is brought along with doing this. It was noted the Trust might need to look at taking on a larger school to balance the finances out.

Historically if a Trust took on a school with a deficit the DfE would wipe it but now they will only loan the Trust the money and the Trust would have to pay it back. The meeting overall was positive and no concerns were raised. The DfE were reminded that whilst the Trust is Kirklees based, it is also on the border with Barnsley and Wakefield.

Update from Mrs Atkinson, for the Education & People Committee.

- Restructuring was a discussion point in the meeting and there were some good proposals brought up in the meeting.
- When the Trust grows there is no current risk but to bear in mind it could potentially turn to a risk due to funding and capacity within the Trust.
- Ongoing funding challenges was discussed around how it could affect morale with colleagues.

Update from Mr Marshall, for the Finance, Audit & Risk committee.

- Mr Wade has been elected chair of the Finance, Audit & Risk committee.
- Discussions took place regarding budgets and challenges.

#### Trust Improvement plan

Mrs Humphreys noted the summary of progress is included in the Trust improvement plan. There are some areas that are complete and some areas that are progressing within the plan.

Q: How many tasks have been affected since the Executive Lead: Operations, Business & Efficiency has left?

A: All tasks were given to either Mrs Humphreys or Mr Field. It has allowed the opportunity to gain greater efficiencies.

Q: The objectives that are "in progress – delayed", is there a risk they won't be completed?

A: Any objective that is delayed remains a priority and will be looked at by the executive team and adjusted accordingly.

**ACTION: Mrs Humphreys to add a prioritisation section to the Trust Improvement Plan.**

Item	Minutes
------	---------

<p>44 Safeguarding</p>	<p>Mrs Greenough noted the TRA (Teachers Registration Agency) referral that happened in the Trust two years ago was heard in January and it was decided it didn't meet the threshold.</p> <p>Mrs Godman noted she conducted an assurance visit in January and discussed her findings at the Education &amp; People Committee meeting. Arrangements are secure across all the schools within the Trust. There is ongoing support regarding causal homophobic and racial language with is being used and this will be monitored.</p> <p>It was noted an external review took place at Scissett Middle School and it was noted some children hear the word 'gay' being said in a negative context but the biggest issue was bad language.</p> <p><b>ACTION: Mrs Hellewell to share the Trust's Transgender policy with all Trustees.</b></p>
<p>45 Trustee updates</p>	<p><u>Publication of Diversity data agreement</u></p> <p>Mrs Humphreys noted it is strongly recommended for the diversity data to be put on the Trust's website but if it identifies specific person you don't have to.</p> <p>A discussion took place regarding how much data should be published on the website.</p> <p>It was agreed by Trustees present in the meeting for gender, age, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation and proximity to be shared on the website. It was also suggested by Trustees for the Trust to create a summary statement to explain how the Trust encourages a wider diversity.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: All Trustees approve for the diversity data of gender, age, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation and proximity to be shared on the website, along with a summary statement.</b></p> <p><b>ACTION: Mrs Humphreys to create a summary statement relating to diversity data and to share with Mr Marshall for approval.</b></p> <p><u>Visits including assurance visits</u></p> <p>Mr Marshall noted he has completed an assurance visit at Birdsedge First School and attended Birdsedge First School Finance &amp; Operations meeting.</p> <p><u>Training attended</u></p> <p>Mrs Hellewell noted the next training session is the development focus session and it's being held on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2024.</p>



Item	Minutes
	<p><u>Other activity attended</u></p> <p>Mr Marshall noted he has attended a DfE meeting.</p>
<p>46 Focus item</p>	<p>Breakout groups were created and discussions took place in each group regarding Growth, HR and Finance / Pupil numbers.</p> <p><u>Group one looked at Growth.</u></p> <p>The following points were taken from the groups discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are pro's and con's to taking on a school which needs a lot of improvement.</li> <li>• A conclusion was not reached within the discussion.</li> <li>• The Trust would like clarity from Trustees on how they would like the Trust to proceed.</li> <li>• Trustees agreed to pause the conversion process currently to allow for more time for more financial due diligence and for a meeting with the chair of governors to take place.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION: Mrs Greenough to arrange a meeting with the chair of governors regarding conversion process.</b></p> <p><u>Group two looked at HR.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a decline in staff morale.</li> <li>• Any issues need to be addressed head on.</li> <li>• There needs to be an understanding of the aspirations of individuals and to open channels for these colleagues.</li> <li>• Discussions took place regarding part-time working and job sharing.</li> <li>• If there are any changes that are going to take place, to allow colleagues as much notice as possible.</li> </ul> <p><u>Group three looked at Finance/pupil numbers.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion took place regarding current challenges and the outlook on the current financial situation.</li> <li>• There is falling demand for places within schools.</li> <li>• The Trust are receiving extremely limited funding.</li> <li>• The Trust could potentially look at collaborative procurements with other schools outside of the Trust.</li> <li>• Low pupils numbers were discussed.</li> <li>• What does the Trust need to do, to do what we want to do?</li> </ul>
<p>47 Risk Register</p>	

Item	Minutes
	<p>The 'Mast_RiskRegister_SpringT1_academic year 23_24' was shared with Trustees prior to the meeting for review and discussion.</p> <p>Mrs Hellewell noted the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk ID 90 probability decreased to a 3, risk is now a medium level.</li> <li>• Risk ID 103 &amp; 104 are high risks and are maintaining high levels.</li> <li>• Risk ID 21, 91, 100, 103, 104,105 are all maintaining levels.</li> <li>• Risk ID 98 is proposed to move from live to monitor.</li> </ul> <p>RESOLVED: The risks at board level were reviewed, discussed, and approved.</p> <p>Mr Field noted there are several finance risks that have increased and these were discussed at the Finance, Audit &amp; Risk Committee.</p> <p>Mrs Humphreys noted the risk register has been moved away from local governing bodies and all proposed risks come to the headteachers and Mrs Greenough. If a risk is put on the risk register, it will be noted at the next local governing body meeting.</p>
48 Scheme of Delegation	<p>Mrs Hellewell noted there are no updates following a termly review of the Scheme of Delegation.</p> <p>Mrs Humphreys noted there will be some adjustments made to the Scheme of Delegation at the next review. The executive team will bring proposals to Trustees.</p>
49 Policy update	<p>The following policies were noted as approved and ratified at the Board Committees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Mast Academy Trust Freedom of Information Policy</li> <li>• The Mast Academy Trust Bereavement Policy</li> <li>• The Mast Academy Trust Capital and Revenue Reserves Policy</li> <li>• The Mast Academy Trust Charging and Remissions Policy</li> <li>• The Mast Academy Trust CLA Policy</li> <li>• The Mast Academy Trust Health and Safety</li> <li>• The Mast Academy Trust Information Security Guidance for Staff</li> <li>• The Mast Academy Trust Investment Policy</li> <li>• The Mast Academy Trust LGPS Discretions Policy</li> <li>• The Mast Academy Trust SEND Policy</li> <li>• The Mast Academy Trust Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs Policy</li> <li>• The Mast Academy Trust Staff Capability Policy</li> </ul>

Item	Minutes
	<p>RESOLVED: The policies listed above were noted by the Trust Board.</p> <p>The following policy was noted for ratification at Trust Board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Mast Academy Trust Attendance March 2024 Policy</li> </ul> <p>RESOLVED: Trustees ratify the Mast Academy Trust Attendance Policy.</p>
<p>50 Important documents to note</p>	<p>The following documents had been provided to Trustees prior to the meeting for information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance workload research</li> <li>• Governance workload research summary</li> <li>• SRMSAT – School Resource management self-assessment tool submission</li> <li>• EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers</li> <li>• Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance</li> <li>• Working together to improve school attendance.</li> <li>• Economic crime &amp; corporate Transparency act 2023</li> </ul> <p>RESOLVED: The Trust Board noted receipt of the documents.</p> <p>Mrs Humphreys noted the Economic crime &amp; corporate Transparency act 2023 relates to Companies Houses and looks at how we report in. The Trust solicitor will deal with any changes to the act. One new thing is the Trust will be required to ask for ID from Trustees and the Trust will need to verify them.</p> <p>Mrs Humphreys noted the old governance handbook has been archived and two new handbooks have been issued: one handbook for maintained school and one for academies. There have been no major changes and there is a helpful guidance tool.</p>
<p>51 Any other business</p>	<p>RESOLVED: There was one item brought up under any other business.</p> <p><u>Chair of governors position at Scholes Junior &amp; Infant School</u></p> <p>A discussion took place regarding the chair of governors position at Scholes Junior &amp; Infant School.</p> <p>It was noted an interim chair will need to be appointed for a period of time.</p> <p>Trustees approved for discussions to take place outside of the meeting to find a suitable interim chair.</p>

Item	Minutes
<p>52 Future dates for meetings of the Trust Board</p>	<p>RESOLVED: That the next meeting of the Trust Board would take place on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2024 at 6pm – Development focus</li> <li>• Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2024 at 6.30pm – Trust Board</li> <li>• Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at 6pm – Being strategic training session.</li> <li>• Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at 4pm – Education &amp; People Committee</li> <li>• Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at 6pm – Finance, Audit &amp; Risk Committee</li> <li>• Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2024 at 6.30pm – Trust Board</li> <li>• Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2024 at 6pm – Annual Conference</li> </ul>
<p>53 Agenda, minutes, and related papers to be excluded from published version</p>	<p>RESOLVED: Matters discussed in item 48 and 51 have been excluded from the minutes for confidentiality reasons.</p>

## Summary of Actions

Minute Reference	Action
M43_20032024	Mrs Humphreys to add a prioritisation section to the Trust Improvement Plan.
M44_20032024	Mrs Hellewell to share the Trust's Transgender policy with all Trustees.
M45_20032024	Mrs Humphreys to create a summary statement relating to diversity data and to share with Mr Marshall for approval.
M46_20032024	Mrs Greenough to arrange a meeting with the chair of governors regarding conversion process.