



Full Board of Trustees

Hybrid meeting held on TEAMS and at Spring Common Academy

Tuesday 29th March 2022 – 6pm

MINUTES

Present: Mark Williams; Sue Bailey (Chair); Wayne Palmer (WP); Rebecca Bierton (RB)

Present remotely: Rebecca Ward (RW); Julie Perry (JP); Billy Mollison (BM); Ilker Yoney (IY);

In Attendance: Kim Taylor (Exec Head); Helen Nicholls (Clerk)

In Attendance remotely:

No.	Minutes	Actions
1.	Welcome and Apologies Apologies from Mike Westcott Rudd were accepted by the board Quoracy – Quorate as more than 3 members present	
2.	Declaration of Pecuniary Interests None Received Action: IY pecuniary interest form still outstanding – Clerk to forward a new form and IY to return.	Clerk/IY
3.	Approval of Minutes for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">The Board of Trustees' meeting 10th February 2022 Decision: Minutes from the board of Trustee's meeting on the 10 th of February were agreed as an accurate representation of the meeting and approved by Trustees.	
4.	Matters Arising and Agreed Actions Update <ul style="list-style-type: none">Members and Trustees to send photo of themselves for Trust website – Members to forward to Clerk to collate and send onto trust	Clerk

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Signed.....(Chair) Date.....

Clerk

- All Trustees to complete online Prevent training – Unable to access online, Clerk to send new access round to all Trustees
- Class at Huntingdon Regional college – Decision on starting recruitment for KS1/KS2 teacher. – Exec Head visited college today she explained that the rooms need refurbishment but have an assisted WC and are very close to SEND suite with outside areas. She said that the college is very excited to get started and the idea is to build up to a placement for 10 learners. They are confident for a September start. Exec Head proposed instructing head of school to start recruitment for a new KS1/2 teacher to replace those used at the college. She explained that the school will be asking some of the more able students to attend the college site, leaving those who have more sensory needs at Spring Common Site. The Legal team will develop contract which should be brought to board after Easter. College considers this doesn't need agreement from CCC, but in terms of placement it would help reduce waiting lists.

The Chair questioned if the Local Authority will place children with us if the lease agreement isn't in place? Is there any risk of having a teacher and no children?

Head explained that they are very keen to work with us and already getting requests from all local schools who wish to support getting their SEN children into school; the school is experiencing high demand.

A Trustee questioned whether there should be an admissions policy which covers the admissions for all sites. Do we have this? Also, when the funding streams for this will come online is there a minimal risk of funding lagging?

Exec Head explained that for special school there is spot purchasing. This means funding is received at different points through year. For children with top-ups, we get monthly amounts. She explained that there is a small lag but very inconsequential. The admission policy is not the same as for primary or secondary schools and that LA will continue to place more students into school even after reaching pupil allocated numbers. Tribunals will often look to place pupils up to 5% above PAN. She explained that all that is needed is a document which states the admission policy is through local authority.

The Chair enquired about the need for transparency about which pupils' access which site and that parents might wish for one placement or other.

The Exec Head stated that the policy section needs to be on the website. She will bring statement to the board and once agreed this can be uploaded. She explained that they can then start to advertise out to parents. Who would contact LA for those places rather than the school.

A Trustee questioned the impact on staff at Spring Common Academy and asked if only 1 teacher would be affected.

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	<p>The Exec Head suggested that 1 teacher and 2 TA's would be needed. Ideally a teacher from Spring Common will move to the college classroom, and their position backfilled.</p> <p>The Chair advised that the teachers have already been working with and supported by college, so have built up a relationship. She expressed that it would be worth while sending more than one teacher to the college at different times in order to help with succession planning.</p> <p>Trustees then discussed starting recruitment for a new teacher in terms of financial risk. It was agreed that the risk is low, as interview can be held in May by which time there will be a higher degree of confidence that the plan will go ahead. If not then no appointment will be made.</p> <p>The Chair asked for a Show of hands to support the creation of la ease and advertising for a KS1/2 teacher.</p> <p>Decision: The Trustees approved lease creation and advertising for KS1/KS2 teacher.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clerk to send out list of available county training courses. – Complete <p>Trustees discussed training courses available and mandatory training to be completed.</p> <p>Action: Chair asked for all Trustees to complete safeguarding training where this hasn't been completed and for certificates to be forwarded to clerk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk log amendments -Risk log was checked again by FPP for further discussion and new version is on this agenda • Policies - Amendments made to Complaints Policy as suggested. The Complaints Policy was sent to ESFA and the Trust received an approval letter in return. 	All
5.	<p>Board of Trustee Membership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and record appointments, resignations, and vacancies <p>Chair to provide a Trustees update:</p> <p>Linda Adam has come to end of term of office. This leaves a vacancy for a Chair of the TLW committee. An advert for vacancy on TLW will be rerun and at next committee meeting a new Chair will be voted in. Chair of Trustees will welcome any interest and conversation in advance of next meeting.</p>	

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<p>6.</p>	<p>Finance</p> <p>Items to follow up from FPP meeting 8th March 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit tender Process – agreed 3 independent Trustees, KT and finance manager as audit team. • Leadership at Wisbech – Proposal for recruitment – discussed and this would be referred to board. • Invite Julie Perry, Trustee to next FPP meeting on 12 May 2022 to discuss recruitment strategy (raised by JP at TLW) – Items for discussion include succession planning, what does recruitment strategy look like, and of backfilling roles. Need to look at medium term view of how to attract and develop the right talent. <p>Trustees discussed recruitment in terms of challenge around funding and the need to make investment decisions at the right points to maintain financial resilience.</p> <p>The Exec Head explained that the financial manager is well ahead will developing the 3 year budget and working hard to get information on fixed costs. A mid year review has been conducted and now looking at next school budget.</p> <p>Chair of FPP committee explained that they had also looked at the indexation of teachers pensions at last meeting and the implications for those staff who hadn't had a pay rise this year. He explained that discussion continued following the meeting and that committee members had agreed to a proposal to apply indexation to relevant staff.</p> <p>Exec Head replied that the indexation had been applied to 2 members of staff who met the criteria.</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>TLW</p> <p>Items to follow up from TLW meeting 2nd March 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academy Advisory Group membership update for both schools and Parent & Carer representation. <p>The Chair explained that the TLW had talked about vulnerability in AAG to take care of routine and operational responses and feedback to TLW. Chair confirmed that a full AAG is in place in SCA so should start to get regular feedback to TLW, but that at RMA there is still not this capacity. They have discussed about actively advertising.</p> <p>Exec Head explained that this needs to be conducted ASAP. She has approached people who are keen to be involved. She asked Trustees if they would be happy for her to approach people to get their involvement. She suggested that she was aware of people who would stand temporarily whilst local community become involved, and that she and the Chair would develop an advertising strategy for parents and people from local area.</p>	

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	<p>A Trustee asked for this be documented as a governance risk and that a review of effectiveness of AAG's should be conducted. They suggested that this should typically be through a cycle of self-evaluation and that a strong educationalist, or a SENCO who can bring technical challenge is needed as part of the AAG.</p> <p>A Trustee questioned whether a separate group needs to be set up for Wisbech Green.</p> <p>Trustees discussed the suggestion of a pre-opening working group for Wisbech Green who could then be invited to form part of the AAG once open. The Exec Head then asked Trustees for permission to have this as the responsibility of the trust rather than the head of school. This was agreed with the Chair suggesting a letter is written to the head of school regarding this decision.</p> <p>Trustees agreed to pursue links in the Wisbech area to find people who may be willing to sit on the pre-opening group.</p>	
8.	<p>Safeguarding:</p> <p>Trustee's discussed nominations for a new lead safeguarding Trustee. No formal nomination was recorded at this time, but Chair to meet with JP to further discuss position moving forward.</p>	
9.	<p>Executive Head Report:</p> <p>The executive head provided a report for review prior to the meeting and discussed relevant points from the report.</p> <p>The Exec Head informed the Trustees that an interview for head of school at SCA would be taking place tomorrow. Explained that the candidate was the person who was previously invited to interview, and that they had now had more time to consider the position. She asked Trustees to be available to make a decision on whether to offer employment should the interview proceed well.</p> <p>She informed Trustees that the support staff pay award has been concluded but that this hadn't been processed in payroll for March due to problems at EPM. She explained that they have let staff know that this is the case and apologised.</p> <p>A Trustee question whether this pay would be backdated?</p> <p>The Exec Head confirmed that this is the case.</p> <p>She explained that the trust is on track to complete all statutory checks and the only outstanding item is a roof survey. The trust is embedding a culture of safety with an external audit booked for SCA on 12th May and that they are awaiting a date for audit at RMA.</p> <p>The Exec Head talked about the pre-opening of Prestley Wood and Wisbech Green as part of the year 2 objective. She explained that they were in discussion with local authority about trends and a growth plan for Prestley wood and that</p>	

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the expansion of Wisbech will happen in a gradual way. It will not start with full numbers in September 2023

The Chair asked whether the growth plan would be shared with the Trustees. The Exec Head replied that this would come to Trustee's after it comes back from LA. A Trustee questioned the strategy for the Trust and asked to be signposted to this section on the website. The Exec Head agreed to send a link. The Trustee questioned the critical success factors and the KPI's used to monitor strategy with the aim to understand these better. The Exec Head explained that there is a separate KPI document, and that the strategy is revisited on a regular basis and targets then set. She suggested that a meeting is held in the summer term to discuss strategy.

The Exec Head informed the Trustees of items from Objective 4 of her She explained that report a quality improvement cycle is in place in both schools. Reports should be completed at end of spring term and these will be brought to TLW committee.

Safeguarding reviews are planned and have started to identify priorities. These priorities will be circulated to the safeguarding Trustees and a strategy for safeguarding will be developed around this.

A Trustee suggested that the use of the program Clarity may be beneficial when trust moves up to 4 schools as this will enable combining of data and analysis of trends. The Exec Head thanked the Trustee for their recommendation

Discussion moved to objective 5 of the report – creative educational opportunities. The Exec Head explained that both schools need to develop creative a curriculum. Spring Common had a change of art teacher this year and is developing its Arts Mark Program. Riverside meadows has creativity on timetable and some good artwork has been produced. Both schools have had arts days and evidence for this. Will support RMA to start the arts mark program next year.

At Riverside Meadows an innovative curriculum is developing following curriculum training. This has enabled brand new opportunities for students to support their leisure and general interests, supporting them to feel that they want to be in school more.

Objective 6 – Community access and participation in local communities. Reconnecting with partnerships is a focus for both schools, with lots of meetings taking place. Spring Common had visitors from Belgium this week. Both school councils are active and appraisal systems have been rolled out to Riverside Meadows.

A Trustee explained that they were familiar with having a curriculum intent that is established at a trust level and then implemented at local level. They questioned whether this would be the case going forward with the trust.

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The Exec Head explained that Riverside meadows is using a similar method for developing their curriculum as that established at Spring Common. She explained that the next phase for the trust will be more collaborative, with subject leader support. This should start to happen more in the next year.

Objective 7 – Capacity and competencies strategy to develop exceptional staff. The Exec Head explained that this objective has been very difficult through Covid. A lot of work has been done through job evaluations. HOS at Spring Common has worked on coaching and mentoring, but absences have had a big impact. This has had an even bigger impact at Riverside Meadows and need to push forward here. Talent spotting at appraisal is not sufficiently developed yet at RMA. Lesson visits have been reduced during Covid but will be a focus for leaders going forward.

Objective 8 – Building wider partnerships. Developing multi agency partners at RMA which is new for the school as didn't have this in place in previous trust.

Good reputation as an employer in our area with many agency workers having gone on to permanent jobs at both schools.

Been involved at lots of national groups – SEND national group and medicines in school national group. Horizons are developing a real presence. Invited to a reception at 10 Downing street with both heads of schools invited to go.

Objective 9 - 19-25 strategy. Trying to have a facility at Alconbury. Trust has a design plan for this. Linked into a local support group and trust are continuing to lobby Local Authority to get this into their plan. There is a concern with gaps in placements.

A Trustee suggested getting the Fenland and Cambridgeshire opportunity area involved. That it may be possible connect into this and lobby from there. Wisbech is part of the area, so may be able to attend meetings.

[A Trustee questioned the Rag rating of the document and commented that progress made isn't clear.](#) The Exec Head agreed to update before next meeting.

Trustees returned to a discussion of the curriculum. It was agreed that the curriculum for schools should be different but that a framework for the development of the curriculum should possibly be in place. The Chair suggested that there should be a statement from the trust about having an offer for pupils and what we want the offer to be. A future discussion about brand values that sit above the curriculum was proposed.

A Trustee suggested that it would be useful before the strategy meeting to circulate documents from last year. That new Trustees need to recognise the journey the trust has been on. It was noted that an external facilitator helped the Trustees develop strategy previously and after further discussion the Chair agreed to contact the facilitator and set up a meeting for the end of the school year.

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	Action: Chair to arrange external facilitator to attend strategy meeting	Chair
10.	<p>Risk Log:</p> <p>The executive head provided a copy of the risk log for review prior to the meeting and discussed relevant points.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covid still with us and could be facing partial closures again after Easter. A Trustee commented that long covid is very concerning. Also, still need to be mindful of mental health impacts of lockdowns. Additional complexities may manifest in children under our care given that many are vulnerable. <p>The Exec Head told Trustees that schools still have an outbreak plan and use Covid risk assessments with control measures which can be switched on and off.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have had some resignations at RMA which has increased risk there. • Attendance better than national and around the same for local area. 87% at SCA normally 92-93% so still depressed. 70's for RMA with some persistent absence especially in yr 11's. <p>A Trustee asked if the trust have experienced any children missing from education?</p> <p>The Exec Head confirmed that this wasn't the case and that attendance teams are scrupulous in this. Some pupils are coming in part time or access other services but all are having welfare meetings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff absence has been higher this term than anytime through Covid. Sickness has increased, but commitment to come back has been strong. • Curriculum documentation is a priority, specifically for an Ofsted inspection at RMA. There is a risk to the Ofsted judgement if documentation is not in place. The school have done some amazing things and need to focus on documentation urgently. The risk is that it will reduce our Ofsted judgement because of lack of back up paperwork. In class things have improved but this won't match with paperwork currently evidenced. This was exposed during SEF reviews. <p>Trustees questioned whether Exec Head should be part of the SEF review or should Heads of school be writing these independently. Trustees challenged the Exec Head as to whether the Heads of school were able to see where they had areas of concern without being directed by the Exec Head. The Exec Head was confident that heads of school were aware of areas of focus for their schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At RMA have an issue with staff mobility. Capacity for leadership team is greatly reduced at the moment, and with no AAG in place this is significant. Both sites have issues around delivery and this would be picked up in a focused Ofsted about capacity to improve. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confidential Minutes from the board of Trustee’s meeting on the 10th of February were agreed as an accurate representation of the meeting and approved by Trustees. 	
14.	Date of Next Meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TLW Committee Wednesday 3rd May FPP Committee Tuesday 12th May Full Board of Trustees Tuesday 25th May 	

Meeting ended at 21:33

Key
Text highlighted Red - Outstanding action
Text highlighted Green - Completed action
Text highlighted Blue – Trustee challenge

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Action Log

Action	Assigned to:	To be Completed by:
Action: IY pecuniary interest form still outstanding – Clerk to forward a new form and IY to return.	Clerk/IY	25/05/2022
Action: Members and Trustees to send photo of themselves for Trust website – Members to forward to Clerk to collate and send onto trust	All	25/05/2022
Action: All Trustees to complete online Prevent training – Unable to access online, Clerk to send new access round to all Trustees	All	25/05/2022
Action: Chair asked for all Trustees to complete safeguarding training where this hasn't been completed and for certificates to be forwarded to clerk.	All	25/05/2022
Action: Chair to arrange external facilitator to attend strategy meeting	Chair	
Action: Risk log working party to be established.	Chair/ Exec Head	

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