



Minutes

MEETING OF THE DIRECTORS OF THE PEGASUS ACADEMY TRUST

Friday, 10th December 2021

Held at Cypress Primary School as a hybrid meeting
with some directors and members attending virtually

1:30pm

Directors		
Emma Whapham (EW)	Director / Chair of Committee	Present
Nina Pogossova (NP)	Director / Vice Chair of Committee	Present
Jolyon Roberts (JRo)	Executive Principal	Present
Lynne Sampson (LS)	Executive Principal	Present
Xavier Villers (XV)	Director	Present
Ian Patterson (IP)	Director	Present
Richard Hill (RH)	Director	Present
Gary Griffin (GG)	Director	Present
Sasha Henry-Crawford (SHC)	Director	Present
Fiona Fearon (FF)	Director	Present
Trust staff		
Jo Ridge	Chief Financial Officer	Present
Other participants		
Gillian V		Present

Clerked by:	Patrick Ndoro
Supporting documents:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda Board of Directors AGM 10.12.21; • Minutes of Board Meeting 22.10.21; • Dec 21 Exec Principals' report to Directors; • BoD Action Log; • AIP 1 Quality of Education (Curriculum Leadership); • AIP 2 Behaviour and Attitudes; • AIP 3 Personal Development; • AIP 4 Leadership and Management; • AC Meeting Minutes – EPS; • AC Meeting Minutes – BINF; • AC Meeting Minutes – CYP; • AC Meeting Minutes – WHINF; • AC Meeting Minutes – WHJUN • PAT Resilience Plan v2
Meeting closed at:	15:42

1. Apologies for absence and confirmation of quorum

Shelley Davies had sent apologies as she was ill. However, the meeting was declared quorate.

2. Declaration of conflict of interest and annual update to register of interests.

EW had been elected chair in the AGM. JRo confirmed that pecuniary interests have been published on the website. There are outstanding biographies and photos yet to be received for the website.

**ACTION – NP, FF & IP to submit photos to be uploaded to the website.
SHC to provide changes to biography to correct error.**

3. Minutes of the previous meeting (22 October 2021)

See confidential items. There were no further comments to minutes.

4. Matters arising not discussed elsewhere and Action Log

Action 104 – Draft Business Continuity Plan - LS confirmed complete.

Action 113 – Board of Directors Chair Succession - Complete.

Action 123 – KPI document and role description documentation – Ongoing. JR advised that there is a KPI document. However, the majority of the data is based on end of key stage assessments which have not taken place since 2019. To be added to future Board agenda. RH advised the Board that role description documentation has been shared and read.

ACTION – KPI document to be revised and sent as part of Executive Principals' report

Action 126 – SRMSAT to be presented at spring term meeting – Closed. F/Y 20/21 Assessment confirmed. Cannot be done for this year as still in first term of academic year. LS proposed to close as redundant, approved by chair.

Action 127 – Amended Resilience Plan - Discharged. LS confirmed acknowledgement of amended version. Board agreed to discharge.

Action 128 – Directors to submit bio/pictures for website - Ongoing.

Action 129 – Meeting to discuss Ofsted outcomes - Ongoing.

5. Executive Principals' report

LS informed the board that most of the first section of the report (1.1 – 1.2) was discussed earlier and would be noted in confidential items.

1.3 Progress of 'Little Wandle' phonics scheme – Great impact has been seen from the scheme with the youngest children being able to blend sounds and a number of children in KS2 who had previously had issues with reading now making great progress.

LS advised that a number of teachers had observed very positive phonic sessions at BINF on Tuesday 7th December. Good feedback was received from the model lessons. A great deal of time and money have been invested into the 'Little Wandle' scheme and the supporting books. It went without saying that in primary schools children being able to read is an absolute priority. However, the board remains mindful of the balance with other curriculum areas.

JRo explained that the 'Little Wandle' scheme is designed to take approximately 30 minutes for each session. However, at present some lessons have been overrunning and taking up to 50 minutes. We hope to see these times fall as staff become more familiar with the scheme. LS confirmed that longest lessons observed have been 45 minutes but ideally should take no longer

than 25 minutes. Teachers are required to read with each group three times a week hoping that children will be more confident in reading in the future.

1.14 Statutory Assessments

LS advised the board that the first statutory assessments (the delayed Phonics Screening Check) in two years have now taken place across all Year 2 classes. Lower results were predicated than had been seen in previous years because of absence caused by the pandemic.

Some children in Year 3 have been presenting with behaviours expected in Year 1. Essential parts of the curriculum have been missed with some children in Year 2 being unable to count in twos, fives and tens. Staff are working in a variety of ways to “fill the gaps” in learning.

JR confirmed that across the Trust, there have been instances of some Year 6 children having the learning behaviours of much younger children and being easily distracted. This can be attributed to the time spent in national lockdowns whereby children spent a lot of time online and not focused in listening to real human beings.

EW mentioned the controversy around ‘catch up’ sessions which are taking place in KS1 and KS2. She asked if there had been any research or formal studies on what is most impactful?

LS said that she had observed a catch up session in Year 2 and saw a teacher using games, computers and all the resources available in order to try to engage children with the learning. LS did not see a huge impact from this session but felt it would be unfair to make a judgement on one session. LS was aware that the session took place after the end of the school day when many young children are tired.

IP asked whether it was possible to benchmark where we are or where we intend to be over a length of time. What steps are in place to manage going forward?

LS informed the board that the current ambition is to focus on children expected to be ‘on track’. There is no requirement to use old NC levels anymore children but the aim is that pupils are ‘on track’ by the end of the academic year. This may put additional pressure on Year 6 teachers. LS added that the tables test for children in year 4 would be an online assessment

IP questioned whether there would be any comparison to other schools as all would have been affected by Covid. This was asked in response to the Ofsted inspector’s comment that children at Whitehorse Infants were behind those in other London schools without any tangible evidence. RH commented that there was no data collected and this comment was purely anecdotal.

JRo added that some autistic spectrum children did well with their home learning as fewer distractions suited their preferred way of learning.

2. School Improvement

LS provided an overview stating that pupil progress meetings had been held to identify children’s individual needs and put interventions in place where necessary. The staff development team has been doing work to look at planning teams to make them more effective. George Roberts and Ellie Byrne have done work to provide support.

KS1 phonics and KS2 writing lessons have been observed. Across the whole Trust there was only one “less than effective” lesson.

2.6 Academy Improvement Plan (AIP)

RH asked a question about the early feedback from the new speech therapy arrangements that the Trust has put in place this term? JR confirmed that they were going well, probably better

than we had expected. RH added that £38,800 had been confirmed as the total cost for the Trust.

XV questioned whether the Board is disbarred by regulation to spend money on one school and not another. He wanted to know why Cypress was not using the independent speech therapy service in its school. LS explained that services were employed according to need and that, at present, CYP could not afford these services in their budget

JR added that across the Trust 'cross fertilisation' does take place. However, if we also consider CAPEX spend Cypress has already benefited from large amounts of spending in previous years and so it did not seem prudent at the moment to add in more services that they may come to rely on but could not actually afford.

3. Governance

LS informed the board that two MAC meetings have been held for each school this term.

EW asked which directors went to the 12 November training session and what can they share? LS confirmed that SH, IP, GO and RH were in attendance.

RH commented that when observing phonics sessions at Whitehorse Infants he saw a display of the new teaching which was interesting. Some of the words selected were words which could not be decoded using phonic knowledge. The children would have to know why this is. Instead they were told that it is a 'tricky word'.

4. People and Leadership

LS advised that there are two teachers leaving Beulah and both have been replaced. There is the need for a new teaching assistant at Whitehorse Infants due to a resignation. The governance clerk role will hopefully be filled by two candidates. Three people are currently off work with Covid.

RH asked how Covid has impacted pupils?

JRo informed the board that there had not been much Covid amongst pupils. The Trust has not closed a class, key stage or school. LS added that across the teaching staff, anyone who tests positive but is not vaccinated has to be paid and often has an extended period of absence.

5. Financial Stability

LS advised the board of the uncertainty around the effect of increased National Insurance rates on staff wages.

6. Capacity for growth

JRo advised that the Trust is still talking to another school about joining the Trust and felt the recent Ofsted report may not have an impact. LS commented that there are not many schools still wanting to or being told to join a MAT

XV asked if the Trust is geographically limited to Croydon? JRo responded stating that this is no longer the case as senior leaders were now adept at teleconferencing and this meant that the geographical reach of the Trust could be wider. RH explained that the Trust is beginning to look more flexibly beyond Croydon and can be more ambitious than when Pegasus was initially set up

6. Finance Update and approval of Pay Policy 2021-2022

IP provided highlights from audited accounts stating that the Trust had made a surplus of £895K.

Purchases of fixed CAPEX assets were £346K but this came from the Trust's own reserves. Management accounts were very close to audited accounts. September's Management accounts have not been produced. JRi Advised that accounts would be forwarded on Monday 13 December.

IP continued. It was too early to say about the impact of National Insurance - as mentioned in executive principals' report. Two important matters for consideration were the different contribution to each of the schools and children behind because of Covid and how that money is utilised in the best way possible. We do not want to overload children or teachers but have to be open to creative solutions.

RH confirmed that the pay policy had been sent to the remuneration committee. JRo has added the updated policy to USO. TLR 3 has changed slightly by £10.

JRo referred to pages 27 and 28 of pay policy. Teachers' pay scales are unchanged.

Sasha Henry-Crawford left meeting 15:05.

JRo commented that the pay policy is almost unchanged including pay scales from previous years. Needs approval of the board however this was discussed by the remuneration committee. There were no objections and so the pay policy was **APPROVED** by the board.

7. Risk register review

LS advised that the risk register had been circulated prior to the meeting and all updates had been made. Some of the risks have been amended and reduced.

GV asked how pensions were being managed. LS clarified that this was relating to local government and teachers' pension.

IP confirmed that it was covered in accounts and mentioned in discussion. Actual valuations have not been discussed.

JRo advised that there would be no additional pension contributions this year for the LGPS as we were part way through a three-year actuarial evaluation

XV asked whether the rate for the teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) was 23/24%?
JRo replied that contributions are banded and different rates apply to different staff. It is a manageable risk at the moment but to be kept under review.

8. Staffing update

LS brought the Directors up to date with staffing issues at the Trust. All resignations are being covered with new recruitment.

9. Academy Action Plan

LS confirmed that AIP had been circulated prior to this meeting.

RH advised that the AIP has been acknowledged and is on agenda for the next meeting. It has not been reviewed as still very early in the academic year. It will be added to the agenda for every academy council meeting.

EW asked what impact should the board should make? RH advised that the AIP is produced by the SLT and coordinated by NA, Head of School at WHJUN. The Board of Directors will be looking to see how it will be formally measured and monitored.

JRo highlighted the Phonics Screening Check (PSC) and KS2 reading and writing in the SATS. JRo commented that the 'Little Wandle' approach to the teaching of phonics builds self-

confidence. Flash cards are used with no distractions. Children are given a book which they can read almost independently. Children start their reading journey with wordless books and alongside this are taught single sounds (phonemes) and how to blend them

XV queried the format of the AIP and whether it is updated as the school year goes by? Do tasks get checked off as complete when they are done?

JRo confirmed that the AIP is RAG rated (Red, Amber and Green) and the middle sections are completed in an amber colour to show progression and then green once completed.

JRo advised that in previous years, the Trust has been able to achieve 60-70% of the actions on the AIP. As the year proceeds some of the tasks are superseded by other events and priorities.

ACTION – Based on review dates on AIP would get an update in meeting closest to the review date in AIP.

10. Governance Update

Covered as part of the Executive Principals' report.

11. Facilities Update

JR advised that this item had been partly covered in executive principals' report. There was a focus on finishing the library at Cypress Upper. Everything been added to capex spend spreadsheet. Tarmac paths at Ecclesbourne, need to be widened as part of COVID. Assumed 15k but costs 16k.

APPROVED by the board - The board approved the additional costs for tarmac paths

JRo advised the board that the CAPEX spend on toilets at Cypress Lower now needs approval as costs were above estimate and the scheme of delegation. One set of Cypress is being made gender neutral.

Gender neutral toilets total cost now £24k – previously assumed to be £15k

APPROVED by the board.

12. Academy Councils – Autumn 1 meetings

LS confirmed that minutes of the first autumn term academy council meetings have been received.

No comments to minutes – **AGREED** by board.

RH advised that this is the first set of meeting minutes that have been approved. LS confirmed that minutes of MAC meetings do not get released are not published on the PAT website: only those from directors' meetings. EW confirmed that Thornton Heath minutes get approved by its governing body.

RH recommended that minutes need to be reviewed by the board prior to the next meeting

ACTION – Minutes from MAC meetings to be circulated to directors before they are approved.

JRo advised that there used to be approximately 16 educational psychology sessions per year for each school but this has now reduced to six.

RH noted that currently at Beulah there was a number of challenging children in nursery and how difficult it was to arrange assessments for them

ACTION – JRo to investigate private Ed. Pysch input for schools in the Trust. If a potential company can be identified this should be returned to future meeting.

GG left meeting 15:37

13. Correspondence to the chair

There was no correspondence to the chair.

14. Any other business

There was no AOB to be discussed.

15. Meeting dates for 2021/2022

Meeting dates have been agreed.

MACs and directors' day to be arranged.

Signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting	
Chair's signature	
Chair's name	
Date	