



Minutes

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING OF PEGASUS ACADEMY TRUST

Friday, 16th July 2021 at

13.30pm Virtual meeting

(Google Meet)

Directors		
Richard Hill	Director	Present
Ian Patterson	Director	Present
Gary Griffin	Director	Apologies
Nina Pogossova	Director	Not present
Fiona Fearon	Director	Present
Shelley Davies	Director	Not present
Emma Whapham	Director	Present
Xavier Villers	Director	Present
Sasha Henry-Crawford	Director	Present
Jolyon Roberts	Executive Principal	Present
Lynne Sampson	Executive Principal	Present
Trust Staff		
Jo Ridge	Chief Financial Officer	Present
Liane Abbott	Observer	Present

Clerked by:	Katie Bird
Supporting documents:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda 16th July 2021 • Minutes 11th June 2021 • Action Log • Executive Principal's Report July 2021 • Nursery Proposal • Governance Professional and Other Governance Issues • Governance Professional and Committee Clerk • Ecclesbourne Minutes • WHINF Minutes • WHJUN Minutes • Beulah Minutes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cypress Minutes • PAT Anti Racist Policy • Ransomware Paper for Directors • Inclusivity Report for Directors
Meeting closed at: 16.05	

1. Apologies for absence and confirmation of quorum

Apologies for absence were received from Gary Griffin. Nina Pogossova and Shelley Davies were not present.

The meeting was declared as quorate.

2. Board Membership Changes

Appointment of Sasha Henry-Crawford and Xavier Villers.

Directors noted the appointment of Sasha and Xavier and welcomed them to the meeting.

3. Declaration of conflict of interest

There were no declarations in relation to the agenda.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting (11th June 2021)

RESOLUTION: Directors agreed that the minutes represented a true and accurate picture of the meeting.

ACTION: Copies of minutes to be printed and signed by the Chair when possible. (Item 120)

5. Matters arising not discussed elsewhere and Action Log

Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

Action Log

Item 104: Ongoing
Item 109: Complete
Item 110: Ongoing
Item 111: Complete
Item 112: Complete
Item 113: Ongoing
Item 115: Complete
Item 116: Complete
Item 117: Complete
Item 118: Complete
Item 119: Complete

6. Executive Principal's Report

The Executive Principal's Report was taken as read. Further discussion and explanation then took place around each section of the report as follows:

Performance

LS updated directors that the past few weeks had been challenging with several bubble closures across the Trust, including Year 6 at Cypress. A number of staff were isolating due to being 'pinged' on the NHS Covid app or testing positive. It was noted that the situation may worsen in the last week of term.

LS explained that despite the disruption to learning over the past year the quality of work at the schools was high, although children who would have been greater depth (GD) needed some support. The children were being provided with emotional support and the Trust was looking into possible discounted support with 'Place to Be' which would provide emotional psychological support to both pupils and parents. LS commended the staff across the Trust for providing excellent support to the children.

Directors heard that the changes to the Ofsted Handbook focused on the lockdown provision, how the children were taught and how the school's leadership had reacted.

JRo reported that the combined score for end of Key Stage (KS) attainment at Cypress, the only school in the Trust that has so far reported on its data, was 71% which compared well with what we understand to be the national picture. The phonics tests were also good and GD children were performing well. Cypress was performing better in EYFS; 70% compared to 30% reported in other schools.

School Improvement

Directors heard that Nina Achenbach, Head of School at Whitehorse Manor Junior School, was leading on the Academy Improvement Plan which was regularly updated. Despite the disruption over the past year the majority of objectives had been achieved. In English there has been a lot of work undertaken in preparation for next year on the quality of literacy and poetry in the Trust, and in line with the work taking place with the Inclusivity Committee, there had been a revision of texts to be more reflective of the communities that we serve.

The suggested changes to the RSE Policy had been made. There had been further parental consultation this term on the materials used to teach human reproduction in Year Five with the feedback proving to be very constructive.

In light of the changes to the Early Years curriculum a review was taking place across the Trust provision. It was reported that there was good practice in place but some of the schools needed a better outdoor learning environment.

From January 2022 Ecclesbourne would offer some full time nursery places. Jo Walters was leading on this and early research showed that there would be interest from local parents.

Across the Trust all teaching was at least effective, apart from in two classes where individual support was being led by the Head of School.

The new Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) had been published but not yet finalised. It was noted that the biggest changes related to the reporting of sexual violence and harassment. In the Trust schools this reporting and monitoring took place via the 'CPOMS' system. Work was taking place with the Heads of School to look at the revised Ofsted Framework in line with KCSIE. Directors would be sent the revised training slides.

ACTION: Send Directors the revised training slides for Ofsted. (Item 121)

Directors were pleased to hear that the new school office had opened at Cypress.

Beulah Infants had been renting classrooms from the Junior School but due to two spare classrooms in the Infants this would no longer be necessary. Work to complete refurbishment of classes in order to bring the Year 2 classes back into the main Infant school building would be concluded by the end of term.

Governance

All summer MAC's meetings had taken place. The Chair of the Board of Directors in conjunction with the Executive Principal had agreed the focus of the Head's of School Reports.

LS thanked RH for his support in the recruitment of new MACs for Whitehorse Infants and Juniors.

People and Leadership

LS informed directors that there had been high staff retention. One member of staff had relocated to Leeds and a small number had retired. Some staff were returning from maternity leave.

Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) had been renamed as Early Careers Teachers (ECTs) as their qualification now must include a two year probation period. There were four graduates at Beulah and Cypress who had nearly gained qualified teacher status.

In view of a healthy budget position it may be possible to take on more teaching hours at Ecclesbourne Primary School (EPS). It was noted that this school would like a specialised teacher for English and Phonics if a suitable candidate could be found.

A director questioned why the teaching role was challenging to fill and questioned whether the Trust could advertise in different places. LS explained that the role was advertised on the Trust website, through the newsletter and also on 'Indeed', where there had been previous success with recruiting an excellent teacher.

LS reported that Sonia Wesley, formerly of Beulah, had been appointed as the new Trust Admissions and Attendance Officer.

Three members of the Senior Leadership Team would be returning to their substantive roles in September. Directors acknowledged that this may be challenging for them and thanked them for the work they had done.

A director questioned whether the attendance at 95% related to the pupils or staff. LS confirmed that the figure related to pupils which was slightly below national average, but not bad considering the current situation. Teacher's attendance had been good overall.

Please see Confidential Minutes

Financial stability

Directors heard that although the Trust was in a financially stable position, the reduction in pupil numbers at Cypress was concerning.

A director asked whether this was a borough wide issue and heard that other schools were in a similar position. JRo explained that some families had moved out of London as working from home became more widespread. As the children moved through the

school the families would often relocate and were replaced with younger children, leaving gaps in the Upper school.

A director questioned where the document referenced in point 5.6 was. LS explained that this document had been presented to the Finance Committee.

A director asked what the impact of the Borough's SEND strategy was on the Trust. LS explained that the biggest impact was the children coming into the school with Educational Health Care Plans who required a full time teaching assistant and adequate funding was not provided. It remained to be seen whether allocating money through the locality SEND Forum would be a suitable replacement.

Directors received an update on the Trust expansion project and heard that JRo was in talks with some prospective schools.

Directors discussed the summer school and asked whether this was still being run. LS confirmed that on summer school at EPS would be run, predominantly outside.

Discussion moved on to bubbles and the plans for September. Directors asked whether the bubbles would continue into the new school year. JRo explained that bubbles would cease from August 16th and the self isolation rules would require only the ill child to isolate with others needing possible lateral flow tests. The guidance was not fully clear yet.

Directors thanked the Executive Principals for their report.

7. Finance Update

The Chair of the Finance Committee provided directors with a summary of the items discussed at the meeting of 2nd July 2021.

Buzzacotts, the Trust's auditors had attended the meeting and presented the timetable of the financial year. There had been discussion with them about the financial position of other trusts and it was noted that a number of other trusts were also displaying a surplus. The three year forecast in other trusts showed a stable two year picture with a more challenging third year.

The quarter 3 management accounts showed a healthy surplus. This was attributed to many factors including greater income, teacher expenditure against budget was lower, received income for Free School Meals and energy bill savings. These savings had meant that the Trust could spend on capital expenditure projects at a cost of approximately £340k. JRo reported that this amount may rise further due to spending in the final quarter. Directors acknowledged the several successful bids for grants including £267k for replacement boilers and fencing at Cypress via the SFA condition improvement fund

The discussion turned to the challenges facing teachers and pupils and the Board were keen to emphasise that the favourable financial position should be used to support the needs of those in the Trust.

The budget for 2021/22 showed a healthy surplus. The Finance Committee challenged on the salary costs, but this was revisited and there were no further concerns.

ACTION: JRi to send directors the budget for 2021/22. (Item 122)

This was actioned immediately after the meeting and directors approved the budget for 2021/22 via email.

8. Risk Register Review

Directors noted the Risk Register. There were no further updates given.

9. Policies and other documents for consideration or approval:

Anti-Racist Policy

Directors heard that this Policy had been created carefully and reviewed by JRo. The policy was conciliatory and advisory and was built around good practice and has the support of the Inclusivity Committee.

[A director questioned whether the note at 5.2b should refer to MACs.](#) It was confirmed that this should read directors as they can specify what Heads of Schools report on.

Please see Confidential Minutes

Ransomware paper

The Executive Principal drew directors' attention to the paper which was taken as read. It was noted that the changes at 4 and 4.1 were made to ensure a safer system. Advanced anti-virus had been installed and a multi factor log in had been introduced for staff working from home. The Trust's files were backed up to a number of places.

[A director questioned whether the Trust had ever been victim to a cyber attack.](#) JRo reported that there had been incidences of small viruses in the past but not for many years.

[A director raised the risk of attempted fraud through phone calls and emails](#) and the EP reassured him that staff within the Trust were alert to the risk. The Trust was signed up to email alerts and kept informed of the latest scams. The banking system used required multiple QR codes to access it and was very secure.

Fiona Fearon left the meeting at 15.30.

Governance Professional and other Governance Issues

Directors discussed the governance within the Trust, and it was raised that if an independent review of governance took place there may be areas identified that needed improvement.

Discussion moved on to the challenge of recruiting Members with their limited role description. The Trust currently has three Members including the Chair of the Board of Directors. The optimum number was recommended as five. It was agreed that some documentation would be provided to Members to support them in their role including an updated Key Performance Indicator document and a detailed role description setting out the duties of a Member. All directors would give thought to contacts who may be suitable for the role.

ACTION: Provide Members with KPI document and role description documentation (Item 123)

NGA Governance Professional and committee clerk model role-description

The Chair updated governors on the requirement for the Trust to employ a governance professional. The Executive Principal detailed the challenging recruitment process but was optimistic that Liane Abbott with the support of Ann Lennox and Lynne Sampson would be able to provide Governance support.

The issue of GovernorHub was raised and Katie Bird explained the pros of using the system including recording of Declarations of Interest, KCSIE training, distribution of papers to directors and MACs. The advantage of storing all of this information in one place was discussed.

Directors agreed to request a demonstration and a trial period of GovernorHub.

Directors agreed to sign up to NGA Membership.

ACTION: Ann Lennox to organise GovernorHub trial (Item 124)

ACTION: Ann Lennox to sign up for NGA Membership for the Trust (Item 125)

10. Academy Councils

Directors noted that the Academy Council minutes and acknowledged the different challenges facing the schools. The Executive Principals had taken on board the Finance Committee's recommendation to spend money if needed, including on staffing, to support the schools. RH reported that he had asked Heads in the MAC meetings that he had attended and one school requested speech and language support, a full time SALT had now been employed across the Trust. Two other schools requested a reading dog which was something the Trust were exploring.

11. Correspondence to the Chair

A letter had been received from the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of the ESFA regarding the Academies Handbook, this detailed the requirements of the SRMA and a governance guide.

A new version of the SRMSAT was due to be available in January 2022, with a list of the questions to be published in the autumn.

ACTION: Complete SRMSAT to be presented to directors at Spring term meeting. (Item 126)

12. Confidential items

*** Please see the Confidential Minutes***

13. Any other business (notified to Chair/Clerk in advance)

Directors discussed the venue of the meetings next year and it was agreed that the first meeting of the year would be virtual, with a view taken about the subsequent meetings. It was agreed that a hybrid approach may be suitable.

JRo reported that the Trust continued to be a London Living Wage Employer, this included payment of contract staff. Two staff who had been employed through an agency long term would be bought onto the payroll in September. Despite being on the LLW these staff were receiving minimum pension contributions via their agency and this situation would be improved for them once they join the LGPS. These members of staff would be on full time contracts with the Trust from September 1st 2021.

14. Meeting dates for 2020/1

22nd October 2021 – Board of Directors

26th November 2021 – Finance Committee

10th December 2021 – AGM, followed by Board of Directors

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