

## INSPIRE PARTNERSHIP MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

### TRUST BOARD MEETING MINUTES

**DATE:**

Tuesday 6 October 2020

**TIME:**

7.00pm

**LOCATION:**

Via Microsoft Teams

#### PRESENT

<b>Chair of Trustees:</b>	Mr J North (JN)	
<b>CEO:</b>	Mrs S Vickerman (SV)	
<b>Trustees:</b>	Mr B Smith (BS)	Mr G Worsdale (GW)
	Mr C Gray (CG)	Mrs C North (CN)
	Mrs T Jackson (TJ)	Mrs C Norfolk (CNOR)
	Mr P Arundel (PA)	Mr J Cripps (JC)
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Mrs T Fallon (COO) (TF)	Mrs L Charlesworth (LC) Deputy CEO
<b>Clerk:</b>	Susanna Stott (SS)	
<b>Apologies:</b>		

ITEM	ACTION
<b><u>PROCEDURAL ITEMS</u></b>	
<b>1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>	
There were no apologies for absence.	
<b>2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>	
There were no Declaration of interests received in relation to the meeting. SS commented that new Declaration of Interest Forms will be emailed to all Trustees following this meeting and asked that they be signed and returned to Jo Batty at the Maypole Centre for holding. It was agreed due to the Covid-19 situation all signatures can be added electronically.	SS
<b>3. CHANGES TO TRUSTEES AND MEMBERS</b>	
There were no changes to appointments of Trustees, however the IPMAT have appointed a new Member, namely Karen Partridge. Karen has a background in Accountancy but is now working within Communications and has already supported the MAT with the design work for our Trust and school websites.	
<b>4. CODE OF CONDUCT TRUSTEES</b>	
The Chair explained that new Code of Conduct forms are required to be signed by Trustees. These will be sent out by SS following this meeting, and it was agreed that electronic signatures were sufficient due to the Covid-19 position.	SS

ITEM	ACTION
<b>5. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR</b>	
<p>The AGM of the Trust Board took place and JN was nominated by CN to continue as Chair for a further year's term of office. This nomination was seconded by CG and agreed by all Trustees.</p>	
<b>6. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR</b>	
<p>CN was nominated by JN to continue as Vice-Chair for a further year's term of office. This nomination was seconded by CNOR and agreed by all Trustees.</p>	
<b>7. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES</b>	
<p>Members of the Committees within the IPMAT were confirmed.</p> <p><b>Resource &amp; Audit Committee</b> Mr C Gray Mrs T Jackson Mrs C Norfolk Mr J Cripps Mr J North</p> <p><b>Standards &amp; Curriculum Committee</b> Mr G Worsdale Mr B Smith Mrs C North Mr P Arundel Mr J North</p> <p><b>Pay committee</b> Mrs T Jackson Mr C Gray Mrs C Norfolk</p>	
<b>8. APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIR TO EACH COMMITTEE</b>	
<p>The appointments of Chairs for each Committee were agreed during the meeting.</p> <p><b>Resource &amp; Audit Committee</b> Mr C Gray</p> <p><b>Standards &amp; Curriculum</b> Mr G Worsdale</p> <p><b>Pay committee</b> Mrs T Jackson</p>	
<b>TRUSTEE MEETING</b>	
<b>1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING</b>	
<p>The minutes of the meeting were agreed as a true record and will be signed by the Chair when face to face meetings can occur.</p>	
<b>2. MATTERS ARISING</b>	
<p>There were no matters arising other than Graham Worsdale noted his attendance at this meeting has been missed. SS offered her apologies for this oversight and will revise the minutes accordingly.</p>	
<b>3. CORRESPONDENCE</b>	
<p>The Chair noted there was no correspondence to share with Trustees.</p>	
<b>4. CEO REPORT</b>	
<p>The CEO report has been shared with Trustees prior to the meeting.</p>	

ITEM	ACTION
<p>SV explained that the report has been dominated by the current Covid-19 situation across the Trust. The Fitzwilliam issue arose due to one parent testing positive. The virus was passed to her children, niece, nephew and grandparents. This resulted in closures in EYFS and Yr6.</p> <p>Five members of staff at Towngate Academy went on a night out and unfortunately all tested positive for the virus. This resulted in the close of EYFS, Yr5 and Yr6. SV commented that Parents were concerned and upset, and Governors were very unhappy. An emergency Governing Body meeting took place which the CEO attended and noted how disappointing it was that this has happened. The HT and EWO (based at Towngate Academy) have also now had to isolate for 14 days. Both are due to give birth on 10 October and their birth plans have had to change.</p> <p>SV explained that the HTs are extremely weary. Staff in schools are coming in later than usual, albeit on time to start lessons. This is entirely due to the staff members own childcare issues with the staggered start times of their children's schools.</p> <p>A number of staff across the Trust are absent due to the track and trace programme. A member of the Central Team based at the Maypole Centre has now been confirmed as having the virus which has meant that the COO and Alison Ramsey are having to self-isolate at home for the next 14 days.</p> <p><b>Q: Is there anything we can to give extra support into the school i.e. parents volunteering, other volunteers?</b>  <b>A:</b> Under the current guidelines we cannot let any parents into school. Staff now have to wear masks or visors when meeting any parent.</p> <p>TF explained that during the initial stage of lockdown a number of staff were furloughed. These staff have now been redeployed into areas across the school including support at lunchtimes. Staff have been extremely flexible and supportive.</p> <p>LC commented that five schools within the Trust have qualified for funding to recruit two Academic Tutors for maths and literacy per school which will add capacity to the staffing. An application has also been submitted through the Kickstart scheme for funding to recruit a further 40 members of staff in areas of admin support, two playworkers per school and premises. We are currently waiting for a response.</p> <p>CEO noted we are pleased that at this point we have had no full school closure and commented that the HTs are extremely supportive of each and sharing good practice and resources.</p> <p><b>Q: What is attendance looking like currently across the Trust?</b>  <b>A:</b> It is patchy. Where schools have historically had good attendance, it is remaining strong. Where attendance has been historically weak, it is not as good as we would like. We are fining families for any holidays taken, and we are following up with any absenteeism with phone calls and home visits.</p> <p>LC explained that at Ash Grove Academy there are small instances of children having to self-isolate and these are not included in attendance figures. It appears to be the same families where attendance has continued to be an issue and are using Covid-19 as an excuse. We continue to follow up with these families with phone calls and home visits.</p>	

ITEM	ACTION
<p><b>Publicity</b> SV explained that Karen Partridge, the new Trust Member has a background in media and is interested in the vision for the Trust. She has been working alongside us with Engaging Education on the design work and wording for the creation of the new websites. Whilst the Vision for the Trust was developed four years' ago, it has stood the test of time and will not change significantly. Ash Grove Primary are the pilot school. LC commented that she has now viewed the draft website and the navigation process, but the mock-up of the pages needs some improvement.</p> <p><b>Finance</b> In the absence of the CFO, SV commented that the COO and Alison Ramsey have completed the IPMAT school budget forecasts. The budgets had been shared with Trustees prior to the meeting and approved by the Trust Board. Sheryl Cardwell has been appointed as a consult for two days per week to support the COO.</p> <p><b>Buildings</b> Following the publication of the CEO report, we now have the COO and Alison Ramsey self- isolating at home. The Trust Estates Manager has broken his foot and may be away from work for some time. We are awaiting the outcomes for two school appeals for the CIF Bids.</p> <p>Centrally we received an H&amp;S complaint from the HT at South Hiendley. Following an unannounced visit by Health &amp; Safety around the site there were no issues reported.</p> <p><b>Grove Lea Conversion</b> The conversion date for Grove Lea Primary conversion to the IPMAT is likely to be 1 March 2021. A meeting is due to take place very shortly with the school, Regional Schools Commissioner and Wakefield Local Authority.</p> <p><b>New Headteachers</b> SV explained that we are giving a considerable amount of support to the new HTs across the Trust at what are clearly difficult times to be a new HT. HT meetings are now taking place once a fortnight and we have a separate weekly meeting for the new HTs on a Friday afternoon. They are appreciating the support and the sharing of issues, documentation, and guidance.</p> <p><b>Policies</b> A number of policies have been shared with Trustees via the GVO portal as below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IPMAT Intimate Care 2020-21</li> <li>IPMAT Aggressive or violence towards staff 2020-21</li> <li>IPMAT Management of Head Lice 2020-21</li> <li>IPMAT Missing Child 2020-21</li> <li>IPMAT Mobile Phone – 2020-21</li> <li>IPMAT On-line Safety 2020-21</li> <li>IPMAT Signs and Indicators of Abuse 2020-21</li> <li>IPMAT Social Media Policy 2020-21</li> <li>IPMAT Uncollected Child and AS Club Policy 2020-21</li> </ul> <p>These policies have been approved by Trustees.</p> <p>SV noted that the new Disciplinary and Capability Policy will shortly be sent out for consultation and once amended if required, will be shared at the next Trustee meeting for final approval.</p>	

ITEM	ACTION
<p><b>5. CHIEF OPERATION OFFICER'S VERBAL REPORT</b></p> <p>As the CFO is currently absent with illness, the COO will also cover finance issues.</p> <p>As part of the COO Verbal Report, documents have been shared with Trustees prior to the meeting:</p> <p>Core Office to schools within the IPMAT CIF 2020-21 Proposed Management Charge INSPIRE Pay Policy 2020-21 Budget Summary for Schools, Aspire and IPMAT</p> <p>TF explained that the main focus has been on finance and the completion of the budgets due the deadlines we had for submission to the DfE.</p> <p>TF shared an update on the CIF bid works across the Trust noting the current issue we have centrally due to the Estates Manager who would be project managing all the projects, being absent from work. AS continues to work from home and on his return will be visiting all the schools on a regular basis to check on the status of all repairs.</p> <p>The Gawthorpe Academy boiler replacement is now complete apart from a small snagging list.</p> <p>Girnhill Infants - Stage 1 is now completed to link the electrics for the new gates into the reception area. The remainder of the work for the fencing will be completed at half-term.</p> <p>S.Hiendley Academy - Work started two weeks ago and is ongoing and will not finish until after Christmas.</p> <p>Towngate and Half Acres – Both schools repairs are roofing projects and work will start after half- term and is expected to finish in January or February 2021.</p> <p>During the summer term the Trust purchased three Fogger machines through the DfE Covid fund to enable us to deep clean the schools. TF commented that we have recognised that to enable us to reassure staff and parents, we need one per school at a cost of £350 per machine. We are hopeful that we can claim these further costs through the DfE scheme but if not it will be a cost that the school will have to incur. We are continually liaising with schools for the supply of PPE equipment as we need to ensure that all staff have every possible protection measure in place. Face visors and masks have been ordered for each school, including at the Maypole Centre. We are putting staff safety first.</p> <p>TF noted that she is currently managing three long term absence cases. All staff continue to have access to the confidential counselling services and feedback has been really positive.</p> <p><b>Staffing</b></p> <p>One staff dismissal has occurred at Ash Grove Primary due to a safeguarding issue. Legal advice was taken before the dismissal took place as the member of staff had less than two years' service.</p> <p>The ongoing tribunal case with a previous member of staff is due to be heard in November and hopefully concluded then. Costs have been covered through RPA as we followed all the procedures correctly.</p>	

ITEM	ACTION
<p><b>Finance</b></p> <p>Following the previously shared final school budgets, the COO thanked Trustees for the feedback and comments. TF noted that the focus has been on the one-year planning as the DfE return was only required for one year. We have not yet completed further forward planning but will be visiting this area with the HTs throughout the year.</p> <p>All school budgets look positive, however TF commented that we have had to work on the data we had to hand, and this could still change. The carry forward figures will be supplied by Gibson Booths, and until the year end accounts are completed we cannot finalise these figures.</p> <p>A couple of schools currently have in year deficits, but the carry forward figures means no school will have any deficit in the next year's budget. Plans are now in place to complete more frequent budget reviews with the HTs across the MAT. These reviews will be shared with the Trust Board on a regular basis throughout the year.</p> <p>TF explained that there is considerable work to be completed on the future planning. However, overall budget positions are better than expected and reassuring. We are now starting to upskill the SBOs so they can clearly understand their school budgets.</p> <p>TJ noted that SBOs having a good understanding of the budget will reduce the coding errors.</p> <p>The Chart of Accounts is a work in progress. Once we are running the Management Accounts we should see a much more accurate picture of school and the Trust positions and less coding issues. CG commented that this was very positive and as a Trust Board being able to review the budget positions throughout the year will ensure we are able to keep track.</p> <p><b>Q: With regard to the carry forward figures, presumably we will have last year's accounts figures at this time, is this why you can't verify the accounts?</b></p> <p><b>A:</b> We started looking at the figures in May this year and recognised that we needed to put a lot of accruals and adjustments through the Management Accounts. Gibson Booth verified the carry forward position before we issued it.</p> <p>TJ commented that it isn't unusual to not have the final figures at this stage.</p> <p><b>Project Management levy charges</b></p> <p>TF shared the proposed levy charges to the schools for the central project management of the CIF Bid works. The % increases are different for the larger projects, but other increases are not significant. Trustees approved the charges.</p> <p>TF reminded Trustees that following changes to the Academy Financial Handbook we are now required to have two separate audits for the internal and external audit process. Internal audit costs are currently approximately £12,000. The current costs have added to the budget and a tendering process has begun. Sheryl Cardwell has been asked to tender for the internal audit business. TF noted the potential for savings and explained that we have had to sign with Gibson Booths for the end of year accounts for this year and will be using them for the next financial year. CG agreed and noted that he has previously raised the issue of the costs for the internal audits.</p> <p>TJ commented that audits are delving more into areas of non-financial auditing. It will be important that the Trust identifies areas of focus in terms of Risk Management.</p>	

ITEM	ACTION
<p>JN explained that the tendering process for new auditors would need to be completed during the Spring term as the Members of the Trust are required to give final approval to any appointment. TF requested support from Trustees during the interview process following receipt of the tenders.</p> <p>TJ noted that she did not believe it is too late to appoint auditors for 20/21 and commented that she has previously expressed concern with using Gibson Booths as our auditors, particularly relevant to the Trust end of year report. TJ agreed to share tendering documents and discuss further with TF. CG commented that this was the best way forward.</p> <p>SV explained that Ash Grove Primary has a major issue with IT at the school and it is likely to cost approximately £50,000 to make the improvements needed. Currently there is not enough money in their budget to pay these costs and asked if Trustees would agree that we loan the funds from the Trust reserves with a 5-year term of payback agreed. LC explained that the IT equipment leased was costly and not particularly good quality. In order to fulfil the curriculum, we will need this equipment. We have asked for two trolleys of Ipads and two trolleys of laptops. Ipads are in the budget, but there is no budget available for laptops. The network also needs considerable improvement and may require a Server fitting on school premises. We need to bear in mind the likely Ofsted Inspection during this academic year and the likelihood of the requirement of offering remote home learning. Trustees agreed this proposal.</p> <p><b>Q: Do we need to establish a figure on how much we can loan?</b>  <b>A:</b> The work needs doing and there is no risk from a Trust perspective as the funds will be paid back.</p> <p>SV agreed to email Trustees with the final costings.</p> <p><b>Q: Have we received the Covid-19 catch up funding?</b>  <b>A:</b> Yes, spending plans are in place for every school. The catch-up plans are being reviewed and SV has met with the HTs to discuss the most effective way of using these funds, particularly bearing in mind the Government will expect to have evidence of the impact. Each school will have to submit all the catch-up plans to SV by the 16 October to be agreed centrally.</p> <p>LC noted that Phonics will be a key measure and KS2 outcomes another important area to be included.</p>	<p>TJ/TF</p> <p>SV</p>
<p><b>6. CHANGES TO SCHEME OF DELEGATION</b></p>	
<p>The Governance within IPMAT October 2020, Scheme of Delegation had been shared with Trustees prior to the meeting. Trustees were asked to read this document prior to the meeting for comment and or review.</p> <p>JN explained that he and SV have spent some time looking through the Scheme of Delegation, specifically through the education and finance sections of the document.</p> <p>Any additional work provided by the central team for schools is now reflected within the document. Areas of ultimate responsibility have also been reviewed and now added clear guidelines that ensures the Trust Board can remove a Chair from the LGB. SV and JN noted they are very happy with the final document. The Governance Handbook is currently being reviewed by the Chair.</p>	
<p><b>7. EDUCATION PSYCHOLOGIST</b></p>	
<p>The Chair explained that the Trust have appointed an Education Psychologist, namely Sarwat Akbar (SA) for one day per week and she is working extremely well within the</p>	

ITEM	ACTION
<p>schools. LC noted that the Education Psychologist is very proactive, extremely well organised, and very proficient and she has thoroughly enjoyed working with SA whilst she is spending time at Ash Grove. Her work rate is outstanding. SA is also supporting the Trust with a further piece of work to run the recruitment of a Speech &amp; Language Therapist. In the short term she has found back fill for this role until recruitment to this role is finalised.</p>	
<p><b>8. TRAINING</b></p>	
<p>Trustees were reminded of further training available during the Autumn Term and should they wish to book on either course, please email enquiry@wntai.co.uk.</p> <p>19 October – Safeguarding Training 9 November – Roles &amp; Responsibilities for Governors, Trustees and Members</p> <p>The first Chairs meeting is to take place via Teams on 13 October 2020 and JN explained that the Agenda will include looking at the first part of the Governor Mark. If this goes well, we will look at this further for the Trust.</p> <p>The new skills audit for both LGBs and Trustees will be for individuals and the Chair will forward a copy to all Trustees following the Chairs meeting.</p>	Chair
<p><b>9. AOB</b></p>	
<p>The Pay Policy had been shared with the Trust Board for approval prior to the meeting. TF explained that the only changes were to the nationally agreed pay scales. Trustees approved the Policy</p> <p>LC shared a verbal overview of the position with the new LGB at Ash Grove Primary including the appointment of a new Chair and further co-opted governors. LC noted that we feel in a very positive position with the commitment and support already shown.</p>	
<p><b>10. DATES OF NEXT MEETING</b></p>	
<p><b>Resource &amp; Audit Committee</b> 10 November 2020 @ 4.30pm 23 March 2021 @ 4.30pm 13 July 2021 @ 4.30pm</p> <p><b>Standards &amp; Curriculum Committee</b> 20 October 2020 @ 7.00pm via Microsoft Team 16 March 2021 @ 4.30pm – venue TBC 20 July 2021 @ 4.30pm – venue TBC</p> <p><b>Trustees Meeting</b> 1 December 2020 @ 4.30pm 19 January 2021 @ 4.30pm 11 May 2021 @ 4.30pm</p> <p><b>Chairs Meetings</b> 13 October 2020 @ 7.00pm via Microsoft Teams 2 February 2021 @ 4.30pm – venue TBC 18 May 2021 @ 4.30pm – venue TBC</p>	
<p><b>MEETING CLOSE TIME: PM</b> <b>Next meeting 1 December 2020 – 4.30pm at the Maypole Centre</b></p>	

SIGNED BY THE CHAIR: 

DATE: 01.12.2020