

INSPIRE PARTNERSHIP MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

TRUST BOARD MEETING MINUTES

DATE:	TIME:	LOCATION:
Tuesday 19 January 2021	7.00pm	Via Microsoft Teams

PRESENT		
Chair of Trustees:	Mr J North (JN)	
CEO:	Mrs S Vickerman (SV)	
Trustees:	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)
In Attendance:	Mrs T Fallon (COO) (TF)	Mrs L Charlesworth (LC) Deputy CEO
Clerk:	Susanna Stott (SS)	
Apologies:		

ITEM	ACTION
<u>PROCEDURAL ITEMS</u>	
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
There were no apologies for absence.	
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
There were no Declaration of interests received in relation to the meeting.	
3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING ON 6 OCTOBER 2020 AND 12 JANUARY 2021	
The minutes of the meetings held on 6 October 2020 and 12 January 2021 were agreed as a true record and will be signed by the Chair, who will return both signed copies to Jo Batty at the Maypole Centre for filing.	
4. MATTERS ARISING	
Meeting on 6 October 2020	
There were no matters arising from the minutes.	
Meeting on 12 January	
There were no matters arising from the minutes. The Chair noted this had been a very good meeting, with positive outcomes.	
The Chair noted that the terms of office for Trustee TJ had finished in December. Via email IPMAT Members have agreed to reappoint TJ for a further four years. Trustees	

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<p>terms of office for JN and CG will finish in early February 2021. Both Trustees have agreed to continue for a further four years and their reappointments will be confirmed at the next Members meeting on 9 February 2021.</p>	
<p>5. CORRESPONDENCE</p>	
<p>No correspondence has been received to report.</p>	
<p>6. MINUTES – STANDARDS & CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MEETING – 20 OCTOBER 2020</p>	
<p>The minutes of the Standard & Curriculum meeting held on 20 October 2020 via Microsoft Teams had been circulated to Trustees prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Page 1 – item 4 – GW, Chair of the Standards & Curriculum Committee commented that the Committee had heard an excellent presentation from Katie Lea (KL), Acting HT at Ackton Pastures Primary and Kyle Allanson (KA), Acting Assistant HT at Ackton Pastures on the remote learning platforms that have been established for schools across the IPMAT. The Chair noted that KA and KL should be commended on the piece of work they have completed in this area.</p> <p>Ofsted update SV confirmed that recent Ofsted reports received have been reports for Covid 19 HMI visits.</p> <p>JN agreed that this had been an excellent meeting and supported the comments by GW as Chair on the work completed by KA and KL, noting how well prepared the Trust has been in the establishment of the remote learning programme, particularly with the third lockdown announced at the start of this term.</p>	
<p>7. MINUTES – RESOURCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING – 1 DECEMBER 2020</p>	
<p>The minutes from the last Resource & Audit Committee meeting held on 1 December 2020 via Microsoft Teams had been circulated to Trustees prior to the meeting.</p> <p>CG the Chair of the Resource & Audit Committee highlighted to Trustees the key points discussed during this meeting. Areas included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invitations to tender for Accountancy provision for the IPMAT – tender documents have been reviewed and it was agreed that a separate small group of Trustees be established to review the tenders. This group comprised CG, JC and TJ. • Financial Policies were reviewed and ratified. • Risk Register review was discussed and agreed that a separate group would review the Risk Register with the aim to ensure that items included, and the scoring process covers all areas of risk for the IPMAT. • Management Accounts were reviewed. CG noted that the Committee were made aware of some access issues in the finance area which have now been resolved. • A loan arrangement with Ash Grove for IT equipment was agreed. 	
<p>8. CHAIRS REPORT ON MEETING WITH LGB CHAIRS</p>	
<p>The Chair requested that future minutes of the termly Chairs meeting, be added to the GVO within the Trustee area.</p> <p>JN explained that the LGB Chairs find these meetings interesting, supportive and having the opportunity to share information and areas of good practice is valuable. Information on activities, plans and actions occurring within the Trust are shared at the meeting and any relevant documentation is also shared.</p>	<p>SS</p>

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<p>Chairs are invited to send any questions before the meeting and answered during the meeting which Chairs also find very useful.</p> <p>JN reminded Trustees that whilst each LGB has one meeting per term they also hold a Governor Development morning each term. Difficulties expressed by Governors for attendance at these mornings are the fact that some employers do not allow their employees the time during the day to attend.</p> <p>JN noted the subject areas discussed at the last Chairs Meeting held in October 2020 which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking through and explaining the areas of the LGB audit. • Governor Training • Governor Mark • Chairs questions <p>JN explained the Governor Mark is a national accolade that can be attained for the whole IPMAT. Section 1 has now been reviewed and Section 2 will be completed at the next Chairs meeting in February. Once the document is fully completed this will be shared with all Trustees.</p> <p>Terms of Reference, Local LGB audits and the Governor Mark will all form part of the Agenda for the February meeting.</p>	
<p>9. CEO REPORT</p>	
<p>The CEO report has been shared with attendees via the GVO portal prior to the meeting.</p> <p>SV commented that she and the Team are doing their very best to keep Trustees consistently up to date with the adaption's schools are continually having to make during Covid 19, and the regularly changing of guidelines from the Government.</p> <p>Attendance</p> <p>Attendance is being carefully tracked in school and was strong in the Autumn term and SV noted the comparison from the same time the previous year detailed in the CEO report. Overall attendance across the MAT for the Autumn was 96.13%</p> <p>We are seeing strong performances in all schools. The Trust EWO is currently on maternity leave and Kay Upson who is covering this role is doing an excellent job.</p> <p>Since the announcement of the third national lockdown there has been a change in the number of children attending school and different criteria is received from government every day.</p> <p>SV explained that all vulnerable children have been offered a place in school. These children have been identified by each school and tend to be the children who for example have special needs or the families are not engaging with school. Places have also been offered to children where both parents are critical workers.</p> <p>We are seeing between a third and a half of all children back in school and SV noted the concerns in the increase in these numbers. Letters have been sent out by all HTs asking parents to only send their children to school when absolutely necessary. A further letter to reinforce this message was sent out on 11 January 2021 from SV and JN. This has had a significant impact and reduced the number of children in school.</p>	

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<p>Remote Learning SV commented that during the Autumn Term remote learning provision has improved significantly and Trustees were right to highlight the work completed by KA, the newly appointed Assistant HT at Ackton Pastures in this area.</p> <p>Safeguarding Each school has identified vulnerable children within their setting and have been classed as vulnerable for a number of reasons including being known to social services, have a CAF in place, poor school attendance or not engaged in home learning. All these children have had invitations to attend school. Where children are still not attending we are having frequent contact with the families both by telephone and visiting the home. Where necessary other agencies such as social services are involved.</p> <p>Staffing in Schools Most of our schools have established staff rotas and are working in a shift pattern for example one week in school and one week working from home. Risk Assessments are being followed in the workplace.</p> <p>Meals Grab bag meals have not been of a great quality, and we have received some complaints from parents. This has been addressed with the company concerned and improvements have been made. However, the food voucher scheme has returned and are now being sent out.</p> <p>Following a call with the HT at Ackton Pastures who had received a call from a parent pleading for food, SV noted her serious concerns that some families do not fit in the categories to receive the food vouchers and are experiencing real hardship.</p> <p>Q: What sort of numbers are we talking about of families affected? A: I am not sure, but it affects KS1 and Reception children.</p> <p>School Improvement LC explained that the main area of focus has been on the use of catch up funding and development of remote learning. LC noted she has worked with schools on how they will deploy the catch-up funding and completed gap analysis testing to ensure we have been effective. Further work then took place on how these gaps could be addressed through quality first teaching, what gaps could be addressed working in small groups all with the same gap knowledge and then working on a 1:1 basis. School Quality Reviews are identifying the success of these strategies and measuring the impact.</p> <p>Some schools within the Trust with deprived demographics could apply to Teach First for the appointment of two academic mentors, one for literacy and one for maths. Teach First pay the salary of £19,000 and the Trust pays the on costs. Teach First haven't been able to guarantee provision of the mentors into our schools and so asked the schools to see if they could source their own. Our first Academic Mentor started at Ash Grove on Monday. Other schools have struggled to recruit to these posts.</p> <p>LC explained that the catch-up programme is linked closely to the Trust Development Plan of targeting the lowest 20%. Schools have identified the lowest 20% in each cohort and are tracking their progress very closely and we continue to look at strategies to overcome the barriers these children may have. The data at the end of the Autumn Term is looking promising and we can see children are getting back on track despite returning with gaps.</p> <p>JN requested that this information be sent to Standards & Curriculum Committee for sharing. LC agreed to forward the information.</p>	

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<p>In terms of Remote Learning, LC commented that KA had completed a fantastic job in training all school staff on all the remote learning platforms. The hardest part has been staff confidence in using the platforms, but this is working very well and has been very successful across the majority of the schools. LC noted that she has been working with leadership teams on what should be included on these platforms, and we now need to think about how we use the curriculum implementation and its translation into remote learning, as an example the Rosenshine Principles. We are also targeting children with catch-up even when they are working from home.</p> <p>LC explained to the Trustees the premise of the Rosenshine Principles and how it is used in teaching the curriculum.</p> <p>CPD SV commented that all CPD in the Autumn term has been delivered remotely. This has not been ideal as you want staff to be able to work together face to face and build those relationships. We have done our best and it has been tricky albeit we have received good feedback.</p>	
<p>10. CFO REPORT</p>	
<p>The following documents have been shared with Trustees prior to the meeting via the GVO portal:</p> <p>Financial Support Proposal HT Jan 2021 IPMAT Risk Management Strategy 2021 – policy approved by Trustees.</p> <p>TF explained that having looked at the Management Accounts reports produced there are some areas of information missing that she would not have expected.</p> <p>TF discussed the document shared with Trustees for the Financial Support Proposal following a call on Friday with a Technical Accounts Consultant, namely Helen Teasdale (HT) explaining our main concerns on the operational side of the financial accounts. TF commented that having someone with the technical knowledge to check that we haven't missed detail in the accounts is going to be important and what we need as a Trust.</p> <p>HT's proposal details the work she would complete and along with areas she will check thoroughly on behalf of the Trust. This will give Trustees assurances that we are giving you the correct information. HT will also be tasked with looking at the financial staffing structure to identify our needs including the capacity and knowledge required along with what is required to replace the CFO role and recruitment. TF noted there is a cost implication but feels this is worth the cost.</p> <p>Q: Who is Helen Teasdale and what is her background? A: TJ explained that she has worked with her in a number of areas in the past where HT has worked with companies specialising in accounts for Academies and has then moved into consultancy work. TJ noted that she is currently the CFO at a UTC and is an excellent Management Accountant. A very safe pair of hands.</p> <p>CNOR agreed that this proposal is good risk mitigation and the right approach to now take. CNOR also noted that we don't want to be in the same position again, we need the control back and to build capability in the team. CG agreed with the comments and that the proposed cost is good value.</p> <p>TF commented that once the structure is finalised, it is likely that HT could support the Trust with recruitment.</p>	

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<p>Internal and External Audit Tender Evaluation</p> <p>CG explained the context of why Tenders for the audit processes were requested and how the group have evaluated each Tender. Firstly Gibson Booths have historically done both internal and external audits for the IPMAT. This has now had to change following updated financial management for Academies and the Trust must have separate companies for both internal and external audit.</p> <p>The Trust has undertaken the tender process for both internal and external auditors. CG noted that the Trust currently pays approximately £14,000 for the internal audit and approximately £20,000 for the external audits on an annual basis.</p> <p>CG, JC and TJ were asked to look at the three tenders received for the external audit business, scoring each tender against the criteria established and met separately. From this we are recommending that the Trust move to appoint Clive Owen Accountants as our new external auditors. Each tender was ranked against a series of criteria, particularly value for money and how they would respond to our requirements. The UHY tender received was substantially higher at £25,000 per annum.</p> <p>The Trust received five responses for the Internal Audit business. Pricing varied considerably with Gibson Booth being the highest fee.</p> <p>Our recommendation is likely to be for the Trust to appoint the Academy Advisory company who following the scoring process came out with the highest score. However, at this point neither myself, TJ or JC are aware of them, so we are following up with this organisation and have arranged a meeting to gain a better understanding of who they are and their capabilities before making a final decision. We just need an understanding of how big their team is and their coverage as they are based near Wolverhampton.</p> <p>Q: If we went with Clive Owen and AA - we could save the Trust approx. £10,000 is that correct? A: Yes, that is correct.</p> <p>CG noted that the service provision we have had in the past from Gibson Booth has been fine, but as we have grown as a Trust we feel we needed more expertise and service focus.</p>	
<p>11. COO REPORT</p>	
<p>The COO report has been shared with Governors prior to the meeting.</p> <p>HR Data</p> <p>TF explained that HR data detailed on the COO demonstrates the high volume of work currently being dealt with by the central HR team.</p> <p>Attendance Management</p> <p>TF explained that the SBOs deal with all short-term absences in their schools whilst she deals with long term absences across the MAT of which there are 7 cases currently as detailed on the COO report. TF shared further background to each of these cases during the meeting and noted that the new cases of long-term absence appear to be linked to Covid. As a Trust we are being as supportive and proactive as we can with these members of staff.</p> <p>Kickstart Scheme</p> <p>TF explained the government's kickstart scheme and noted the Trust are working with Ethos Academy and Pennine Academies Yorkshire Trust on a collaborative approach with</p>	

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<p>the IPMAT as the lead. TF highlighted the final position of temporary posts as detailed in the COO report. A Bid has been approved for 58 positions in total of which 38 will be across the Trust. The breakdown of the posts is detailed on the COO report. TF commented that as a Trust we have delayed our recruitment to these posts as we feel we will have more benefit when these positions can again be based in school.</p> <p>Grove Lea conversion TF noted that we are under pressure with deadlines for the legal documentation and working on the systems updates. A new SBO has been appointed at Grove Lea Primary who will hopefully be in post before the conversion.</p> <p>Payroll A meeting has taken place today with Access Payroll and the Trust will be moving to one payroll with consolidation of Teachers and Support staff from 1 April 2021. Staff consultation will begin shortly.</p> <p>HR Policies Flow charts have now been added for Appraisal, Disciplinary, Capability and Grievance Policies as previously requested by Trustees.</p> <p>Finance update Bacs Limits TF explained that having taken into consideration the CIF payments received we are looking to increase the Bacs payments limits from £100,000 to £150,000 and requested approval from the Trust Board.</p> <p>Q: Can you remind us of the sign off procedures? A: We have now increased the sign of procedure to 3 levels with anything over £120,000 now needing to be approved by TF as the final level.</p> <p>Trustees agreed the increase to the BACS limits.</p> <p>Confirmation of fund balances As detailed in the COO report final fund balances are confirmed as of 31 August 2020 and showing the balances used in the initial budget preparations, the differences are now recorded and highlighted for each school in the report.</p> <p>November and December budget reviews have now taken place using the fund balances as the new starting figures. Final budget reviews have been shared as part of the COO report and the carry forward figures finalised and detailed. TF explained the changes in the final carry forward figures for each school.</p> <p>Premises update Current CIF projects updates has been shared as part of the COO report.</p> <p>CIF 2021/2022 bids had to be submitted by 14 January 2021 and the bids have been detailed as part of the report and shared with Trustees. This includes the expected contributions from schools. TF noted we were close to success with Ash Grove and Gawthorpe Academy bids and have now completed further technical reports that we hope will increase the scores and ensure success in this wave of bidding. If successful this will produce a further £2.6million. A positive piece of work has been completed.</p> <p>SEEF Bids 2021 Alex Swithenbank has worked hard on the submission of bids through the Salix Energy & Efficiency Fund (SEEF) for projects to replace existing light fittings with modern fixtures</p>	

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<p>and LED bulbs. We haven't submitted such a bid before and TF explained the school projects costs and likely savings to Trustees as per the details in the COO report.</p> <p>Q: With regard to the Salix Bids, are we expecting to be notified around April if successful?</p> <p>A: Yes and we will hopefully hear about the CIF bids at around the same time, although the CIF bid decisions were delayed last year due to Covid.</p> <p>Programme of H&S Reviews – The programme of H&S Reviews has been detailed in the report now that Alex Swithenbank is in a position to travel to the schools following his accident and Covid diagnosis. TF noted there are no issues of concern, which is testament to the work Alex has been completing across the Trust.</p> <p>Alex will be working with Premises Managers across schools to create a Trust plan of priorities for repairs. Costs can be added to the budget when we complete the Easter budget reviews.</p> <p>Procurement The COO report has noted the decisions made due to the current Covid 19 situation on the three current contracts up for renewal.</p> <p>Policy for Ratification Risk Management strategy TF noted this Policy has been shared via the GVO portal. Areas currently still highlighted in red, it was agreed to keep under development at this point. Amendments to the Policy will be reviewed in the Autumn Term. Trustees agreed the Policy.</p>	
<p>12. GROVE LEA CONVERSION UPDATE</p>	
<p>SV explained that the Grove Lea conversion is still due to complete on 1 March 2021. Things are currently going smoothly, and we are having regular meetings with the DFE.</p> <p>TF commented that we are currently looking at the budget plan, but we don't expect any difference to the original position projected.</p>	
<p>13. TRUST DEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE</p>	
<p>This topic has been discussed within earlier points of the meeting.</p>	
<p>14. TRUST BOARD AUDIT</p>	
<p>The Trust Board Audit document has been shared with Trustees by the Chair.</p> <p>The Chair explained that as a Trust Board we have completed a similar exercise two years ago. The NGA has now shortened the document for completion considerably and made it much easier to work through. Trustees were asked to complete this over the next two weeks and return to JN. Trustees agreed.</p>	Trustees
<p>15. TRAINING COURSES</p>	
<p>Trustees were reminded of the training courses planned for this term, and were asked to email Susanna Stott at enquiry@wntai.co.uk if they wished to book on any courses. All training will take place via Microsoft Teams for this term and will start at 7.00pm:</p> <p>20 January 2021– Pupil Premium Funding – led by Leah Charlesworth. 8 February 2021 – Safeguarding Training – led by Neil Stott. 25 February 2021 – SEND training – led by Sarwat Akhbar.</p>	

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<p>1 March 2021 – Managing Allegations – led by Neil Stott. 15 March 2021 – Induction for new Governors, Trustees and Members – led by John North. 22 March 2021 – Safer Recruitment – led by Neil Stott.</p>	
<p>16. AOB</p>	
<p>JN noted the appointment of a further Member for the IPMAT, namely Helen Ranson who is based in Cheshire. Her CV was excellent and included considerable work in mental health. We now have five Members which means that JN, is no longer needed as a Member, although will continue to attend meetings.</p> <p>SV noted the considerable work completed on social media platforms for the Trust. Ash Grove have launched their new website and South Hiendley will follow shortly. The next priority is to get the central IPMAT website launched quickly. Pen Portraits from all Trustees were requested, and SV commented that she will share some examples of what is required.</p>	Trustees
<p>17. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS</p>	
<p>Resource & Audit Committee 23 March 2021 @ 7.00pm 13 July 2021 @ 4.30pm</p> <p>Standards & Curriculum Committee 16 March 2021 @ 7.00pm 20 July 2021 @ 4.30pm – venue TBC</p> <p>Trustees Meeting 11 May 2021 @ 4.30pm</p> <p>Chairs Meetings 2 February 2021 @ 7.00pm 18 May 2021 @ 4.30pm – venue TBC</p> <p>All will currently continue on Microsoft Teams and start at 7.00pm...</p>	
<p>MEETING CLOSE TIME: 9.05PM Next meeting 11 May 2021 – 4.30pm at the Maypole Centre</p>	

SIGNED BY THE CHAIR:  Type text here

DATE: 19.01.2021