

CBAT BOARD MEETING

Minutes of the Trustees' meeting held on 25th September 2019 at 6:15pm at Marling School

Present: Nigel Riglar (Chair), Graham Ayre (by phone), Debbie Bird, John Gilbert, Emma Gray (Finance Director), Stuart Wilson (Chief Executive Officer).

In Attendance: David Dale (Clerk).

1. Apologies received and accepted:

Helen Cerullo, Ben Eagle, Nathan Wolstenholme.

2. Declarations of Interest:

SW declared an interest in respect of item 11(ii) on teachers' pay.

The clerk reminded Trustees that the annual update of declarations of interest is now due and that he would be circulating forms for completion by all Trustees. **Action:** Clerk to circulate declaration of interest forms, **Trustees** to complete and return them.

3. Minutes of the meeting of 3rd July 2019

It was proposed by JG, seconded by DB, that these be approved and signed, to be published on the Trust's website. This was **agreed** unanimously.

4. Action point checklist

All actions ongoing or completed.

In respect of action CBAT126, the FD reported that a new Trust Finance manager has been recruited and will take up the post in October.

5. Matters arising

None.

6. Trust growth opportunities

The CEO updated Trustees on the various growth opportunities for the Trust that were currently being explored. He reported that, in respect of possible opportunities to sponsor Church of England Schools, now that CBAT membership meets the Diocesan requirement for sponsoring Voluntary Controlled schools an application has been made to the Diocesan Board and is due to be considered by the end of September. In response to questions from Trustees, the CEO reported that the Trust is only seeking approval in respect of Voluntary Controlled schools, and that there were no particular schools in mind at present.

In respect of the Trust's bid to sponsor a new primary school ('free school presumption') in Stonehouse, the CEO had informed Trustees via email on 20th September that this bid had not been successful. He circulated copies of the written feedback from the county council's Selection Panel. Although the outcome was disappointing, the feedback commended the Trust's bid across a range of strengths, and noted that it had scored second highest of the seven bids

submitted. In a detailed discussion of the feedback received, Trustees made the following points:

- The result is disappointing but the feedback gives cause to be optimistic about future prospects.
- The Trust does not yet have a track record of opening successful new schools or of delivering a step change in the results of primary schools, it will take time to build this experience and until then other MATs with a track record of new primary schools will be in a strong position.
- We need to work on presenting the Trust as an experienced and 'safe' bidder, emphasising the experience and achievements of the last 3 years.

In respect of secondary school need in Gloucester, the CEO reported on positive feedback from the New Schools Network (NSN) on an initial draft of a bid to sponsor a new school in the south of the city under the DfE's wave 14 programme. We will now work to strengthen this bid further to submit in November, based on a clear vision and ethos and a strong case for a comprehensive, co-educational intake without a catchment area and using a 'fair banding' system of allocation places to ensure a balanced ability profile. Public consultation is already underway, including a consultation event at Brookthorpe last week, a leaflet drop, and online feedback. The CEO circulated information on outcomes in Gloucester secondary schools, a paper explaining 'fair banding', a draft admissions policy for the Beacon Secondary Academy, and some initial feedback from the consultation.

Trustees asked questions about the detailed operation of the 'fair banding' system and the potential challenges associated with it, and requested further information about its use elsewhere and what could be learned from that. There were comments about needing to ensure the transparency and fairness of any admissions policy, and ensuring the comprehensive nature of Beacon Secondary Academy. There were also comments about the need to understand the high prevalence of some special educational needs in parts of the county.

Action: CEO to identify some schools using the 'fair banding' system, and to seek views from the NSN and Regional Schools Commissioner's office, and to bring further information back to Trustees for consideration.

The CEO added that there was no recent news in relation to informal discussions with various primary Headteachers in Stroud, or opportunities in Swindon, but that new housing developments planned for Sharpness could bring schools growth opportunities there in due course.

7. Schools updates (interim reports)

The CEO talked Trustees through the reports and summer 2019 performance data for the three academy schools. Test results at Cam Woodfield Junior School had improved, and further improvement is anticipated. At Berkeley Primary School, there were some positive results but results in maths had gone down – swift action had been taken to address this, with a new whole school approach introduced for the new school year and weekly monitoring to ensure rapid improvements. Marling School had achieved its best ever A-level results and second best ever GCSE results. Trustees asked questions about the performance data for languages at Marling, the CEO explained the figures and said that there is a renewed focus on improving results for German and Spanish.

8. Guidance for schools on leaving the European Union

The CEO drew Trustees' attention to the DfE letter of 17th September and associated guidance for trusts and schools about actions to take before the UK leaves the EU on 31st October. He

circulated the action plan that the Trust had prepared in response to this. Trustees raised a number of issues about data protection policies, continuity of medical supplies, and employees with dual nationality, and requested that these be considered when the action plan is updated.

9. School Resource Management Advisers update

The FD updated Trustees on the recruitment, accreditation and deployment of SRMAs. There are currently 4 accredited SRMAs and another candidate progressing through the accreditation process. She noted that there is some wider uncertainty about the longer term future of the SRMA initiative. Trustees asked whether the individuals and the Trust are gaining the knowledge and experience that had been anticipated at the outset, the FD confirmed that this is the case.

10. Health, safety and wellbeing

The FD reported that Cam Woodfield and Marling both currently have some risks associated with site staff. At CWJS the outgoing caretaker has agreed to stay on until the vacant post has been filled. At MS there is an ongoing change process to the operation of the team that is being managed. The replacement of a floor in a classroom at BPS has uncovered the need for wider repairs than anticipated, and the classroom will remain out of use for six weeks.

11. Finance

(i) The FD circulated indicative budgets for each of the three academy schools for 5 years for Marling School (up to and including 2022/23) and for 3 years for the primary schools (up to and including 2021/22). She explained the assumptions on which the budgets had been calculated, including pupil numbers, funding levels per pupil, pay increases, and Government grants. The CEO emphasised the current turbulence in school funding in relation to teachers' pay, differing timescales for various funding streams, uncertainty about the future of pension grants, and awaiting the detail behind the Prime Minister's recent announcement about funding levels per pupil. Trustees noted that on current forecasts Marling School would return to an annual budget surplus from next year (2020/21), but BPS and CWJS would both have an in-year deficit in 2020/21.

(ii) Teachers pay rise: the CEO reported that the STRB and DfE had recommended pay award of 2.75% to teachers. Trustees agreed to continue their policy of adhering to nationally agreed pay scales. Following discussion, it was proposed by JG and seconded by DB that the recommended 2.75% pay rise be passed on to all stages of, and allowances in, the CBAT pay scale, including TLRs, and backdated to 1st September. This was **agreed** unanimously by all Trustees voting. The CEO abstained from speaking or voting on this motion. Trustees asked the CEO to pass on their thanks to all the Trust's teaching staff for their continued commitment and hard work. **Action:** CEO to notify Headteachers of the decision, of practical arrangements for implementing it, and to pass on Trustees' thanks to teaching staff.

12. Audit and Risk Committee

The proposed terms of reference for an Audit and Risk Committee were circulated and discussed. Trustees queried the lack of reference to approval of the Trust's accounts, and GA volunteered to provide some revised wording to address Trustees' comments. Subject to this amendment, it was proposed by GA and seconded by JG that the Board establish an Audit and Risk Committee with these terms of reference, comprising 2 Trustees and one independent person. This was **agreed** unanimously.

Trustees then discussed when would be an appropriate time to establish the Audit and Risk Committee. It was noted that there is currently one vacancy for a Trustee and a further vacancy

may occur shortly. It was agreed to recruit additional Trustees before establishing the Committee. **Action: Clerk** to commence the recruitment process by advertising in Term 2. **Action: CEO and FD** to identify a suitably qualified independent person to invite to sit on the Committee in due course.

13. Complaints

The CEO reported that a panel would shortly be convened to reconsider a longstanding complaint at Stage 3 of the complaints process. This was noted.

14. Trustees' skills/competencies audit

The Clerk circulated a summary of the recent Trustees' skills audit using the National Governors' Association questionnaire. While the audit showed that Trustees individually, and the Board as a whole, score highly in terms of knowledge, skills and behaviour across the broad range of competencies covered, there were some specific questions where results were not quite as high. These included charity law, curriculum development, SEND, and some support services.

Trustees discussed the results and agreed that curriculum development in particular should be strengthened. It was generally agreed that the audit provided valuable information that could be used to identify future training needs and to help with the recruitment of additional Trustees. **Action: CEO and Clerk** to consider the audit results and propose a few areas as a focus for future training and development.

15. LGBs – minutes of last meetings

The minutes of the following meetings were received and noted:

- Marling School LGB 17th June 2019.

The Clerk reported that the LGBs at Berkeley Primary School and Cam Woodfield Junior School had not agreed any minutes since the meetings of 26th June 2019 and 24th June 2019 respectively, and that these had been received by Trustees at their meeting on 3rd July. Trustees asked the Clerk to check that the primary schools' minutes are published on their websites. **Action: Clerk** to check and confirm.

16. LGB recommendations for consideration in line with Scheme of Delegation

None.

17. Trustees' decisions under Scheme of Delegation since last meeting

Trustees noted their decision taken via email earlier this month to appoint Kathleen McGillycuddy as a new Governor to the CWJS School Development Board.

18. Gloucestershire MAT Networking meeting

Trustees noted the invitation to Chairs and Vice Chairs of Trustees to attend a Gloucestershire MATs networking meeting on 6th November. NR is not available but HC is planning to attend, and JG can be available if required.

19. Any other business

The Clerk informed Trustees that Ben Eagle had communicated his intention to stand down from the Board at some point in the future due to personal circumstances, and that the effective date of his resignation would be advised in due course. **Trustees agreed** to undertake a recruitment and selection process to seek two new Trustees to ensure that the Board is

maintained at the appropriate size. **Action: CEO and Clerk** to develop a proposed advertising and recruitment process for implementation in Term 2.

The Chair advised that he had now stepped down as Chair of Marling SDB. He noted that as Helen Cerullo is now Co-Chair of Berkeley SDB, at some point it will be appropriate for her to consider which of the two roles she should continue.

20. Risk register

The FD circulated the latest risk register and drew Trustees' attention to risks 1.1 where the scheme of delegation review had been completed but the Internal Assurance process still needs to be more robust, and 2.1 where Finance Policies are to be reviewed and agreed by Trustees in the next two months (via email where appropriate).

21. Dates of future meetings

The next Board meeting will be on **Wednesday 27th November 2019 at BPS, starting at 6.00pm. Trustees are invited to arrive at 5.00pm** to visit the school and meet members of the SDB informally.

The meeting closed at 8.10pm.



27/11/19.

