

CBAT BOARD MEETING

Minutes of the Trustees' meeting held on 12th October 2021 at 6:00pm via videoconference

Present: Nigel Riglar (Chair), Graham Ayre, Debbie Bird, John Gilbert, Barbara Green, Ruth Hollier, Judith Taylor, Stuart Wilson (Chief Executive Officer – CEO).

Apologies: None

In Attendance: Emma Gray (Chief Finance and Operations Officer – CFOO), David Dale (Clerk).

1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies received and accepted:

None.

3. Declarations of Interest:

There were no new declarations. The Clerk said that he would be contacting Trustees for the annual update of interests to be registered.

4. Minutes of the meeting of 7th July 2021

Trustees considered the draft minutes of the last meeting and noted that they were an accurate record. It was **proposed** by JG, and **seconded** by RH, that the minutes be approved and signed, to be published on the Trust's website. This was **agreed** unanimously.

5. Action point checklist

The Chair ran through the actions. Trustees noted that actions had either been completed or are covered elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting.

6. Matters arising

BG said that she would shortly have some time to enable her to take forward some initial work on the Trust's People Strategy.

7. Decisions taken under Scheme of Delegation

It was noted that Trustees had taken decisions since the last meeting to appoint new Governors to the SDBs at Berkeley and Marling.

The CEO reported that the new Governor at Berkeley had since resigned for personal reasons. Trustees noted that the recent meeting of Berkeley SDB had been inquorate. The CEO noted that he would check on the situation at BPS and the recruitment and retention of governors at both primary schools. **Action: CEO** to discuss with Co-Chairs.

8. Trustee resignations and appointments

There had been no appointments or resignations since the last meeting.

9. School performance data and Headteachers' reports

Marling School: The CEO reported on summer 2021 teacher assessed grades for KS4 and KS5 students. He assured Trustees that a rigorous process had been followed and objective assessments made. The overall trend was slightly downwards following the increase in 2020. At KS4, 73% of students achieved 5+ GCSE grades 9-7 and 99% of students achieved 5+ GCSE grades 9-4. At KS5 for the first co-educational cohort, and with a significant increase in student numbers on previous years, 49.8% of results were at A*-A and 74.9% were at A*-B, with 31% of students achieving 3 A Levels at AAB or higher of which two were facilitating subjects.

Trustees asked about the performance of the first A Level cohort of female students: the CEO said that they had done very well, with grades equal to those of the male students who had come from KS4 at Marling, and their value-added scores were the same as them too. Male students who had entered KS5 from other schools had not achieved the same high level grades, but had achieved higher value-added scores showing excellent progress. Trustees asked about appeals against teacher assessed grades: the CEO said that there had been a number of these, none had been successful to date but the process was not yet complete. Trustees asked that a message on their behalf be sent to all staff thanking them for their hard work and success during what had been an exceptionally challenging year.

The CEO reported on COVID tests, vaccinations, precautions and absences during the term to date. Most precautionary measure adopted last year have been rolled back now. Assemblies and extra-curricular activities have restarted, and the wearing of face coverings is no longer mandatory. 30-40 students have tested positive for COVID, and 4 staff are currently absent due to COVID.

Trustees referred to recent high-profile media coverage of violence against women and asked about the implications for the Trust. They asked about the number of incidents of unacceptable language and behaviour against women. The CEO said that this issue must be recognised and addressed in schools. Marling had been doing assemblies and lessons on topics such as casual misogyny and consent, and had surveyed 6th Form students (with largely positive results). Staff and students were encouraged to challenge any unacceptable language or behaviour. He said that the number of reported incidents has not sufficient to give any indication of trends, but noted that two students are currently on temporary exclusions for using unacceptable language. He referred to the recent Ofsted report [Sexual abuse in schools](#) and said that he would ask for an update from each of the three schools for the Board's next meeting. **Action: Headteachers** to provide updates on sexual abuse, for meeting on 8th December.

Berkeley Primary School: The CEO reported on teacher assessed grades at KS1 and KS2. He noted that Ofsted had resumed inspections and could visit at any time now. Pupil absences were on average 22 daily due to COVID symptoms, positive tests and isolation. On staffing he reported that COVID had had a significant impact with six members of staff having had to self-isolate this term. The School Business Manager had begun her dual role of Operations Manager at both primary schools.

Trustees asked about problems with the broadband service. The CEO said that the change of provider had not gone smoothly, work by BT had been rescheduled and had run into term time. There had also been problems with a SIMS update, this had been raised with the local authority.

Trustees asked about the possible allocation of up to £550k S106 funding. The CEO said that this related to new housing development on a site opposite the school, it would fund the additional places needed and initial discussions with an architect would identify options for doing this.

Cam Woodfield Junior School: The CEO reported on teacher assessed grades at KS2. He referred to key challenges around the high levels of SEN and social, behavioural and mental

health issues. In addition, as reported to Trustees on previous occasions, there remain concerns about the KS1 grades for pupils coming up from the Infant School.

RH (Link Trustee) added further information and comments. Although some pupils had made accelerated progress, there remain significant concerns about the low levels of performance of pupils entering CWJS at Year 3, the majority of whom are well below age-related expectations in reading, writing and maths. There are significant gaps in teaching and learning, some aspects of the curriculum have not been taught, this is serious and will stay with the children through their school career. A further challenge is that the school's budget can no longer support one Teaching Assistant in every class.

Trustees asked many questions and had a detailed discussion about the issues raised, including engagement with parents, assessment of learning gaps, additional resources, specialist help, and other support for the school. It was agreed that this was a matter for the Trust as a whole to recognise and address. Trustees discussed options for escalating their concerns about grade inflation by the Infant School. A number of actions were agreed. **Action: The Headteacher** to prepare a recovery plan with business case to outline the additional support required and the impact this would have. **Action: CEO** to seek advice from the DfE on options for escalating concerns about the Infants School and report back to Trustees.

10. SDB minutes and matters raised

These were noted. Trustees noted the need to recruit and retain local Governors at the primary schools (see item 7 above).

11. Recommendations from SDBs for decision

None.

12. Trust to Trust mentoring – external review of governance

The CEO noted that the review had been very positive, and ran through the main conclusions and recommendations – these have been discussed in detail with the Chair and Clerk. He described the proposal for a Trust Governance Conference next Spring to bring together Members, Trustees, Governors, Headteachers and Clerks. Trustees agreed that this would be a very useful event, and suggested a number of elements for the agenda including an external keynote speaker, launching the People Strategy, and looking at co-operation between schools. It was agreed that Governors and Headteachers should be involved in designing the agenda for the event. The Chair suggested a follow-up event in the Autumn to maintain momentum.

Action: Clerk to contact SDB Chairs/Co-Chairs to share the proposal, set a date in late April/early May, and invite suggestions for the agenda.

13. Academies Trust Handbook and other DfE/ESFA requirements

No further updates since last meeting. The CEO noted that the item on executive pay would be considered at the next Audit meeting. It was that the Clerk should record any future updates in Board minutes.

14. Scheme of delegation

The CEO set out the proposal to establish a Finance, Audit & Risk Committee that will ensure compliance with the Academy Trust Handbook, monitor the financial performance of the Trust and internal controls to ensure that money is well spent, ensure that risks are being properly identified and scrutinised, and advise the Board on any significant matters arising from audits. He ran through the proposed terms of reference and the responsibilities that would be

delegated by the Board. He described the minor changes that would need to be made to the Scheme of delegation.

Trustees discussed the proposal and considered issues around the composition and operation of the Committee. It was agreed that the Committee should meet six times a year, and that its Chair would be appointed by Trustees. With these amendments made, it was **proposed by JG** and **seconded by BG** that the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee be established in accordance with the terms of reference as proposed, and that the revised Scheme of delegation be approved. This was **agreed unanimously**.

15. Trust policies

The CEO presented the updated Teachers' Performance Appraisal Policy. Trustees requested clarification on a number of points including lesson observations, communicating the policy to teaching staff, and the reference in the appendix to additional documents. With these queries satisfied, it was **proposed by RH** and **seconded by JT** that the updated Teachers' Performance Appraisal Policy be approved. This was **agreed unanimously**.

16. Safeguarding

No urgent issues to report.

17. Finance

The CFOO noted that following the decision to establish a Finance, Audit & Risk Committee, budget monitoring reports would be taken there in future. The external auditor, Bishop Fleming, would attend the Board meeting on 8th December to brief all Trustees on the main findings of the recent audit.

18. People

The CEO described the process and timetable for advertising, recruiting and appointing the new substantive Headteacher for Marling School. After national advert, four strong candidates had been shortlisted. It is proposed that the final selection would be made at the end of the process by a panel of Trustees and Governors, with the decision having to be agreed by the CEO and JG. Trustees asked questions about the composition of the panel and sought assurance that all its members were up to date with the necessary training requirements. Having received satisfactory responses on these points, it was **proposed by NR** and **seconded by RH** that the Board delegate the responsibility to appoint the Headteacher to recruitment panel with the agreement of the CEO and JG. This was **agreed unanimously**.

19. Property

The CFOO reported that windows at Marling East Campus would be replaced from late October. The recent heavy rain had identified some problems with leaking roofs at some schools, repairs would be actioned.

20. ICT strategy and operations

The CFOO reported that there have been ongoing challenges with the broadband service during the summer, due to the age of the equipment and the previous provider. There are still some guest wi-fi issues at Marling. However, progress continues to be made.

21. Data protection and privacy

The CFOO reported that there have been no significant data protection breaches. The CEO referred to one minor breach. The CFOO is undergoing the second year of her DPO training.

22. Risk register

The CFOO noted that this will from now on be reported to the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee.

23. Beacon Secondary Academy

The CEO said there is little to report on this other than that the first meeting of the Project Group will take place in November. He has submitted Fair Banding admission policy documents to the DfE and is awaiting a response.

24. Other growth opportunities

The CEO reported that he will meet the DfE later this week to discuss a number of potential growth opportunities in the county over the next 12-18 months. Trustees discussed the desirable characteristics of the type of school that might join CBAT, that would bring capacity, confidence, challenge and a desire to be part of a MAT. However, it is recognised that the Trust cannot determine which opportunities might arise and when, and also that it is unlikely that they will attract additional funding from DfE.

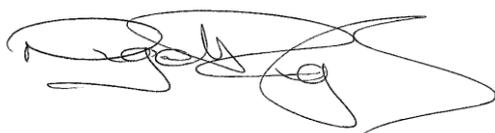
25. Any other business

- i. The CEO updated Trustees on school improvement work with Widden, Park Juniors, and Athelstan Trust.
- ii. Chair to sign Funding Agreement variation documents when next at Marling.
- iii. DB has approached the Trust on behalf of the Friends of Rush skate park with a view to a developing a temporary community-based skate/sports facility on the canal side field, she is currently in discussions with the district council to explore options.

26. Dates of next meeting

Wednesday 8th December 2021 at 5.00pm. It was agreed to plan on the basis that this would again be a virtual meeting, and to review this nearer the time.

The meeting ended at 7.45pm.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. Kelly', written in a cursive style.

8th December 2021