

Meeting of the Academy Transformation Trust Board

5 February 2020

10:00 to 12:00

Venue: ATT Head Office

The 7 principles of public life

Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty, Leadership

Board members	Initial	Position
Bernard Dickenson	BD	Chair
Tom Clark	TC	Trustee
Simon Jones (from item 001.3)	SJ	Trustee
Phil Milligan	PJM	Trustee
Alistair Milne	AM	Trustee
Dave Trotman	DT	Trustee
Margaret Wilson	MW	Trustee
Attendees	Initials	Position
Debbie Clinton	DC	CEO
Claire Pritchard (to item 008)	CP	Deputy CEO, COO
Peter Wilson	PW	CFO
Sarah Bloomer (from item 001.4)	SBI	Director of Safeguarding (DoS)
Susan Byles	SB	RED, Secondary East
Vince Green	VG	RED, Secondary West
Steven Vincent	SV	RED, Primary East
Andy Gannon	AG	HoCA and Clerk
Observers	Initials	Position
Grainne McQuillan	GM	Office of the RSC
Felicity Gillespie	FG	Office of the RSC

Apologies

Board members	Initial	Position
Pat Beanland	PB	Vice Chair

Minutes

ITEM	Detail
001	Routine business
001.1	The Chair welcomed GM and FG who had asked to observe the meeting following recent discussions between the Chair of Trustees and the Regional Schools Commissioner.
001.2	<i>Apologies for absence</i> These were received and accepted from PB. The meeting was quorate.
001.3	<i>Declarations of interest</i> There were none.

	<i>SJ joined the meeting</i>
001.4	<p><i>Minutes of the last meeting</i></p> <p>One Trustee pointed out an inconsistency in the date by which Trustees were required to complete the online safeguarding training. The HoCA confirmed it had been 5 January and agreed to rectify the inconsistency in the minutes.</p> <p>Other than this, the minutes were accepted as accurate.</p>
	<i>The DoS joined the meeting</i>
001.5	<p><i>Matters arising</i></p> <p>The HoCA provided an update on two matters arising from the last meeting:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A01 – four applications were received for our vacant Trustee positions, three via the online Nurole portal, which the Chair agreed had delivered a high quality of applications. Two applicants had been interviewed by the Chair and Vice Chair, and we were now seeking references for these individuals. A third applicant is being interviewed on 26 February. The HoCA also confirmed that he was discussing the possibility of becoming a Member of the Trust with three individuals, following the resignation of two non-Trustee Members. The HoCA confirmed he would keep Trustees updated as the recruitment process continues. 2. A04 – one Trustee had yet to complete the online training but had agreed to do so this week <p>The COO provided an update on the following matter arising:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A08 – with the support of the office of the RSC, the significant change form process had begun in respect of the separation of ICS and ICP, with the intention of completing this during 2020. The COO agreed to keep Trustees informed as this progresses. <p>Trustees noted that all other matters arising had been completed, and, specifically, that the Trustee SCR and training log was now up-to-date.</p>
001.6	<p>Clarification and challenge</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trustees asked whether the potential new Trustees would bring financial expertise to the Board. The HoCA confirmed that two of the three under consideration had extensive financial experience, one as CFO of a large private company and one as a senior leader within a major investment management corporation. 2. Trustees asked whether the potential new Trustees would add to the Board’s ability to scrutinise educational performance. The HoCA confirmed that the third candidate under consideration had significant experience as a MAT CEO and as a DfE adviser. 3. Trustees requested that the membership of sub-committees, especially FRC, be revisited once new Trustees were confirmed. The HoCA said it was his intention to do this. 4. Trustees asked for clarification over the process for appointing Members. The HoCA confirmed that this was a matter for Members themselves and that he was keeping the Board informed for information only.

001.7	<p>Action</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="322 320 416 439">A01</td> <td data-bbox="424 320 1043 439">Amend the minutes of 18 December 2019 to include the 5 January as the deadline for online training to be completed</td> <td data-bbox="1051 320 1193 439">HoCA</td> <td data-bbox="1201 320 1382 439">After this meeting</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="322 443 416 533">A02</td> <td data-bbox="424 443 1043 533">Co-ordinate new Member and Trustee recruitment and keep the Board informed</td> <td data-bbox="1051 443 1193 533">HoCA</td> <td data-bbox="1201 443 1382 533">February/ March 2020</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="322 537 416 627">A03</td> <td data-bbox="424 537 1043 627">Ensure the final online training course is completed</td> <td data-bbox="1051 537 1193 627">HoCA</td> <td data-bbox="1201 537 1382 627">After this meeting</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="322 631 416 721">A04</td> <td data-bbox="424 631 1043 721">Continue to keep Trustees informed as the ICS/ICP separation process continues</td> <td data-bbox="1051 631 1193 721">COO</td> <td data-bbox="1201 631 1382 721">6 May 2020</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="322 725 416 808">A05</td> <td data-bbox="424 725 1043 808">Ensure sub-committee membership is revisited after the appointment of new Trustees</td> <td data-bbox="1051 725 1193 808">HoCA</td> <td data-bbox="1201 725 1382 808">March 2020</td> </tr> </table>	A01	Amend the minutes of 18 December 2019 to include the 5 January as the deadline for online training to be completed	HoCA	After this meeting	A02	Co-ordinate new Member and Trustee recruitment and keep the Board informed	HoCA	February/ March 2020	A03	Ensure the final online training course is completed	HoCA	After this meeting	A04	Continue to keep Trustees informed as the ICS/ICP separation process continues	COO	6 May 2020	A05	Ensure sub-committee membership is revisited after the appointment of new Trustees	HoCA	March 2020
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002	<p>Safeguarding</p>																				
002.1	<p>The DoS presented the paper circulated ahead of the meeting. In response to comments submitted by one Trustee ahead of the meeting, she confirmed she would ensure that acronyms were explained in full in future reports.</p> <p>The DoS drew Trustees’ attention to the new Trust-wide safeguarding app which would provide direct links to local authority contacts and significant resources. She asked Trustees to review the content and make themselves familiar with it.</p>																				
002.2	<p>Clarification and challenge</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="363 1167 1382 1480">1. The Chair asked what the current position in regard to safeguarding at SCA was. The DoS confirmed her view that the situation was improving and that she was spending time in the academy training and coaching the team with a view to strengthening both systems and culture. The CEO informed Trustees that she, along with other ELT colleagues, had conducted a ‘deep dive’ review into safeguarding on 23 January and confirmed the finding that the issues now were more focused on culture (including over-reporting) than on compliance. She also confirmed that additional resource had been agreed for the senior safeguarding team. <li data-bbox="363 1503 1382 1749">2. DT (as the lead Trustee for safeguarding) asked what was being done to ensure consistency of approach across the Trust. The DoS confirmed that she had revised the approach taken by the regional DSL meetings and was moving forward quickly on establishing a common approach to how CPOMS is used and what action is taken. Asked to clarify what the cultural issues were the DoS suggested it was about how people think and about ensuring that cases are appropriately prioritised for action. <li data-bbox="363 1771 1382 1939">3. Trustees asked about progress with the issuing of lanyards as described in the paper. The DoS confirmed that arrangements were in place to roll out colour coded lanyards Trust-wide in the coming months. Responding to a request for reassurance that no visitors were currently allowed into academies unchecked, the DoS gave an assurance that all appropriate checks were currently in place. <li data-bbox="363 1962 1382 2018">4. Trustees asked about the outcome of the CME review referred to. The DoS confirmed she had met with the five academies in question and reinforced their 																				

	<p>awareness of reporting requirements and procedures. This was now being checked by REDs as part of the FAR and CSI processes.</p> <p>5. Trustees asked how the need for additional resource in safeguarding was being planned and what would be delivered for the investment. The DoS said this would enable more thorough evaluation of academy compliance but also support the work on improving a consistent safeguarding culture across the Trust. She is drafting a proposal which will be considered by ELT before coming back to the Board. The COO highlighted the fact that resource was being found more immediately to 'plug' specific gaps in academies, such as the new appointment planned for SCA. Responding to a question from the Chair, the DoS confirmed that planned safeguarding 'spot checks' would be 'no notice' and SB said that additional safeguarding training was being provided to FAR Lead Reviewers to strengthen activity in this area.</p> <p>6. The Chair asked for reassurance that the specific weaknesses in safeguarding knowledge highlighted at RAV were being addressed. The DoS confirmed she had met with the RAV DSL and SV confirmed that training on 'County Lines' had been delivered both in person and online. He confirmed that staff awareness had improved and been demonstrated at the Trust review which occurred in January. Trustees asked the DoS to prioritise also work on this issue with pupils and also reminded ELT that it was our job to go beyond the basic expectations established in regard to our practice.</p>			
002.3	Action			
	A06	Review the ATT safeguarding app and ensure familiarity with its contents	Trustees	March 2020
003	Strategic considerations			
003.1	Discussion of strategic matters was deferred until the strategy session planned for immediately after this meeting.			
004	Performance			
004.1	<p><i>Annual General Meeting 2018-19</i></p> <p>The HoCA informed Trustees that this had happened on 29 January and thanked those Trustees who had attended. He noted that all business had been conducted smoothly and that work was ongoing to more clearly define the activity of Members in the future.</p>			
004.2	<p><i>Education interventions</i></p> <p>The Chair outlined the activity that had preceded this meeting, including the extraordinary SOC meeting that had taken place on 29 January. He described the motivation behind this item as ensuring that there remains a strong degree of focus on delivering a strong performance in key year groups this year.</p> <p>The REDs presented the papers previously circulated and highlighted those interventions which had been immediately implemented Trust-wide following consultation with Principals about what is working. SV confirmed that further work to standardise primary practice would take place next week and all REDs agreed that the focus on intervention was taking place alongside a determination to deliver 'Quality First' teaching consistently in the longer term. SB drew attention to the 'tight' principles already implemented and to the degree of intervention activity focused on emotional wellbeing and improving</p>			

	attendance. All REDs agreed that their focus was on delivering consistent interventions based on practice within our best academies.
004.3	<p>Clarification and challenge</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trustees asked for clarification on how the targets had been calculated. SV responded that they were based on Fisher Family Trust estimates and had been nuanced for different academies based on knowledge about prior attainment. He confirmed the bare minimum expectation that year 6 outcomes would reflect at least expected levels of progress. 2. Trustees asked how they could be sure the projections were valid. SV said this was clear for years 2 and 6 as the projections were based on externally validated assessments. He confirmed the implementation of standard materials in other years would assist consistency and SB noted also that many of our teachers are also external examiners and are used to inform projections in all phases. VG said that confidence would improve in future years also as exam boards and curricula are standardised across the Trust. 3. Trustees asked whether the same academies were off target in different year groups and SV confirmed that this was not the case with primary academies. 4. Trustees welcomed the development of the primary interventions directory and the fact that there appeared to be a clear evidence base for determining the interventions that will work. They reminded ELT that there is an expectation of both pace and exceeding national norms and requested an impact report be produced for SOC after this summer’s results. 5. The Chair asked specifically about the predicted outcomes for RAV. SV confirmed outcomes were expected to improve, but not as much as we would hope. Trustees asked that data in relation to all academies be presented not just for the last year but for the whole period since they joined the Trust as they recognise an accountability for what had gone before also. 6. Trustees asked what was being done to ensure that pupils who arrive in-year achieve better results. SV confirmed that a structured approach was being taken to mirror the good practice in some academies across all our primary academies. The Chair reminded ELT that this had to be a key area of focus as we are aware it affects many of our academies. 7. Trustees confirmed their belief that we should regard EBacc as ‘core’ for the purposes of secondary predictions and SB and VG confirmed this was the approach they were taking. 8. Trustees asked what research had been undertaken in relation to secondary interventions to ensure those being delivered were effective. VG referred to his liaison with other successful multi-academy trusts to inform the ‘tight’ principles and SB confirmed that results had improved year-on-year for those using the PIXL strategy. 9. Trustees asked to see last year’s IDSR for post-16 results as they were keen to ensure that these would improve for this year. They also requested specific PIXL data for individual academies. The CEO reminded Trustees that many academies had seen record results last summer. 10. Trustees reminded ELT that it was important to ensure a balance between ‘tactical’ measures to improve performance this year and strategic approaches

	<p>for the long-term, emphasising that our pupils only have one chance to get the best results. They agreed with the view already expressed at SOC that many of the interventions were not especially radical and should have been in place as a matter of course.</p> <p>11. Trustees re-emphasised their commitment to finding resource where it is needed to support interventions and asked how the strategy was being monitored. The CEO confirmed that it is reviewed by ELT every fortnight and would be brought again to SOC on 11 March.</p> <p>12. Trustees asked whether updated data for primary performance would be available for SOC on 11 March and SV confirmed it would be as a further assessment was taking place next week.</p>												
004.4	<p><i>FAR feedback</i></p> <p>PJM related his experience shadowing the first day of the FAR at TQE in January and urged all Trustees to take the opportunity to shadow a FAR. He highlighted three aspects of the experience which were helpful:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developing his own knowledge and understanding 2. Seeing an academy at work 3. Being reassured that the FAR process is thorough and effective. <p>The CEO noted that there are two FARs remaining this year – at CPA on 12 and 13 March and at RAV on 23/24 April, as well as a further ‘deep dive’ at RAV on 11 June.</p>												
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005	Audit and Risk sub-committee												
005.1	<p>SJ outlined the recent work of ARC and highlighted the fact that the committee is now working on longer-term thinking based on a clearer understanding of risk. He commented that the work on finance in the past year had been very positive and noted the impact of this on the content of the management letter this year.</p> <p>He explained that the rationale for moving from six to three meetings a year proposed was to enable the committee to focus on ‘deep-dives’ into specific areas of risk.</p> <p>MW noted that ARC had received attendance data as part of its safeguarding report and asked whether SOC would also be updated on this. The REDs confirmed this would be brought to SOC on 11 March.</p>												
006	Finance and Resources sub-committee												
006.1	<p>The Chair presented the minutes of the most recent FRC meeting which had been circulated ahead of the meeting. He expressed his hope that new Trustees would re-invigorate the work of FRC. He invited the CFO to provide an update on the current financial position.</p>												

	The CFO noted that the projected surplus was looking hard to achieve given that we were working with approximately 340 additional pupils this year and had not been funded for this. He confirmed he was still in conversation with ESFA in regard to securing additional funding.
006.2	<p>Clarification and challenge</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trustees asked whether the software implementation in regard to financial systems was now complete and the CFO confirmed it was. He said that management reporting would improve as a result of this. 2. Trustees asked how the financial risk for this year would impact on the three-year plan. The CFO said that he was still projecting to come out of deficit on time in 2022 because of the strong performance last year. 3. Trustees confirmed their belief that it was unreasonable to be dealing with such a high number of pupils without receiving funding and offered support to the CFO in resolving this situation.
006.3	<p><i>Financial scheme of delegation</i></p> <p>The CFO presented this document, which had already been scrutinised at FRC. Trustees agreed it was a good document and they were happy to approve it.</p>
006.4	<p>Resolution</p> <p>Trustees approved the Financial scheme of delegation.</p>
007	Corporate matters
007.1	<p><i>Regional Governance Forums and annual conference</i></p> <p>The HoCA presented the paper previously circulated and drew Trustees attention to the dates. AM agreed to attend the RGF in the East and PJM agreed to attend the RGF in the West. All Trustees noted the details of the annual conference.</p>
007.2	<p><i>Global calendar 2020-2021</i></p> <p>The HoCA presented the paper previously circulated.</p>
007.3	<p>Clarification and challenge</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trustees asked for confirmation that the calendar had been reviewed in the light of feedback from academy leaders and the HoCA confirmed that many of the amendments were as a direct result of Principals' feedback. The CEO emphasised her view that the calendar should not drive the organisation but provide a framework for its operations. 2. Trustees welcomed the increased flexibility in respect of many meetings and also noted that MSTEAMS is being used more widely to obviate the need for travel. They requested that the quantum of meetings nevertheless be kept under review for both governors and executives, as there is a concern that the physical and intellectual demands of too many meetings may distract from crucial academy improvement work. 3. Trustees asked whether there were plans to synchronise all Trust-wide PD days and the REDs confirmed this would happen in 2021-22.

	4. Trustees asked that the extent of the commitment be made clear to potential new Trustees and the HoCA confirmed this would be the case. They also asked for a simple summary of dates to be provided to Trustees.			
007.4	Resolution Trustees approved the proposed changes to the frequency of ARC and SOC meetings for 2020-2021.			
007.5	Action			
	A10	Provide a summary of appropriate dates to Trustees	HoCA	After this meeting
	<i>The COO left the meeting.</i>			
008	Specific matters			
008.1	<i>Ofsted monitoring SCA</i> VG presented the updated papers circulated ahead of the meeting and confirmed that he was in regular contact with the HMI in regard to the next monitoring visit. He drew attention to the fact that the Executive Principal would be freer to support SCA from Easter thanks to new Principal appointments at TQE and DUK, as well as to the external audit of compliance and pupil premium work which had highlighted some strong practice.			
008.2	Clarification and challenge <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Chair asked about predicted year 11 outcomes. VG said that last year's results were the best ever and they look to be improving this year, although there remains a problem with high achievers and some concern that improvement is not happening quickly enough. SB reminded Trustees that SCA is currently projecting a positive Progress 8 score as well as improvements in the Basics 4 and Basics 5 measures. 2. Trustees asked what the plan was for enabling SCA to 'stand alone' and be less reliant on support. VG confirmed that the EP would remain attached to the academy and also that there were changes underway in the senior leadership structure that would all be in place by September. He confirmed his view that some external appointments had been necessary at the academy to renew their focus. 3. Trustees reiterated their expectation that the senior leadership and safeguarding leadership teams should be strengthened swiftly and that outcomes should improve this summer. The DoS confirmed that the advert for a safeguarding manager was already live. In response to a question about the resource implications of this, the CFO confirmed he had made provision for the recruitment. 4. One Trustee asked about governance and the impact of the new LAC Chair in particular. The DoS noted that he had led a school out of category before and was having a real impact. The HoCA confirmed that he was delivering training to the whole LAC after this meeting in order to ensure some more dispersed leadership. 5. One Trustee asked about the morale in the academy and how relationships with stakeholders were being managed. VG reported that the community were 			

	<p>remaining supportive and that this was reflected in recent stakeholder surveys. He also noted that staff understand the problems but feel supported. The CEO noted that the issue is consistency and that the difficulty is therefore one of leadership. As an example of this, VG highlighted the fact that one department had introduced A-Level Law and the successful outcomes from this course had resulted in several students going on the read Law at university.</p> <p>6. Trustees asked if the action plan would be updated in format as most of the actions had been short-term. VG confirmed the plan is now contained within the academy's Evaluation and Improvement Plan (EIP) which would be shared with Trustees.</p>
008.3	<p><i>Ofsted monitoring RAV</i></p> <p>SV presented the report previously circulated and drew attention to the appointment with effect from January of an Executive Principal whose previous academy is close to 'outstanding' with excellent outcomes. He also noted the need for a long-term and radical improvement plan, and said that the final plan would be shared with Trustees as it had just been agreed. He confirmed that a FAR is planned for April and a 'deep-dive' review for June.</p>
008.4	<p>Clarification and challenge</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trustees asked about the leadership of the academy and the CEO confirmed this was being reviewed to ensure a clear focus on the quality of education and outcomes for pupils. Trustees reconfirmed the need for improvement at pace and reiterated their support for whichever interventions would ensure this happens. 2. Trustees asked what was being done to ensure that other academies could not suffer the same fate. VG drew attention to the more focused role of the EP which is now able to support Principals more effectively. 3. Trustees asked about governance at RAV and the HoCA said there remained work to do. The LAC has a new Chair who is committed and has received significant training, but there is need for additional governors. The HoCA confirmed that the RGM (East) was working with the academy to secure new recruits and there had been two applications so far. He confirmed all new recruits would be swiftly trained to support the Chair. MW said she would attend the FAR in April to offer additional non-executive scrutiny of the improvement process. 4. Trustees expressed the view that it was unacceptable for RAV to have fallen into category after eight years with the Trust and reminded ELT of their expectation that swift action would be taken to ensure results which exceeded expectations and which remedied the current Ofsted grading.
009	Matters for approval
009.1	<p><i>Admissions policy</i></p> <p>The HoCA presented the paper previously circulated, which had already been scrutinised by SOC. In response to Trustees' questions, he confirmed that the policy remained in line with national guidance and that no complaints have been received in relation to the policy this year. He also confirmed the need for a full consultation on next year's policy, which would enable all aspects of the policy to be fully reviewed.</p>
009.2	Resolution

	Trustees approved the admissions policy.			
009.3	<i>Mark Hall Sports Services – strike off</i> The CFO presented the paper previously circulated.			
009.4	Resolution Trustees approved the proposal to apply for MHSS to be struck off.			
009.5	Action			
	A11	Publish the admissions policy as required	HoCA	28 February 2020
	A12	Begin the process to strike off MHSS	HoCA	After this meeting
010	Any other business			
010.1	There was none.			
	<i>The meeting ended at 12:36.</i> <i>There then followed a Board strategy session attended also by the CEO and the HoCA.</i>			

Date of next meeting:

6 May 2020
12:30 to 15:30
ATT Head Office, Sutton Coldfield

Action log

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