

Meeting of the Academy Transformation Trust Board

3 February 2021

12:30 to 15:30

Venue: MSTEAMS

The 7 principles of public life

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

Board members	Initial	Position
Bernard Dickenson	BD	Chair
Pat Beanland	PB	Vice Chair
Tom Clark	TC	Trustee
Richard Elms	RE	Trustee
Michaela Jackson	MJ	Trustee
Simon Jones	SJ	Trustee
Phil Milligan	PJM	Trustee
Alistair Milne	AM	Trustee
Richard Priestley	RP	Trustee
Dave Trotman	DT	Trustee
Margaret Wilson	MW	Trustee
Attendees	Initials	Position
Debbie Clinton	DC	CEO
Peter Wilson	PW	CFOO
Sarah Bloomer	SBI	Director of Safeguarding (DoS)
Amy Bills	AB	RED, Primary West
Susan Byles	SB	RED, Secondary East
Derek Trimmer	DT	RED, Secondary West
Steven Vincent	SV	RED, Primary East
Andy Gannon	AG	DoCA
Angela Doherty	AD	Clerk

Minutes

ITEM	Detail
	At the start of the meeting the Chair recorded his thanks, on behalf of the Trustees, to Dave Trotman, who was attending his last Board meeting before the end of his term of office in March. He had made a significant contribution to the Board as the Safeguarding Trustee.
001	Routine business
001.1	<i>Apologies for absence</i> There were no apologies for absence. The meeting was quorate.
001.2	<i>Declarations of interest</i> There were no declarations of interest for this meeting. It was noted that MJ will be changing her job role in March. The DoCA will update the declaration at that point.

001.3	<i>Minutes of the last meeting</i>			
	The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as accurate and accepted.			
001.4	<i>Matters arising and actions</i>			
	Actions are complete or carried forward - it is hoped that consideration of 6 th form provision will come to the next Board meeting.			
001.5	<i>Action</i>			
	A01	Financial review of 6 th Form Provision to come to the Board	CFOO	Next Board meeting, if possible
002	Strategic Considerations			
002.1	<i>CEO Report</i>			
	<p>The CEO presented the report which had been previously circulated. She drew Trustees' attention to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The partnerships register is a work in progress (reviewed twice a year) with the impact of any partnership being recorded as the partnership develops. Moving forward the impact field will be filled in, even if it just to note that it is too early to measure. • As directed by the board, the CEO has been asked to raise the matter of the capacity for growth with the RSC. She intends to bring a paper to the Board in May, which will be structured around the criteria published by the RSC on how they judge the effectiveness of a MAT in the absence of the normal performance data. The paper will include consideration of what kind of growth is appropriate for ATT. • She welcomed feedback on the format of the report as a compound report, where any updates are added to the previous report. The report aims to focus on the strategic aims of ATT. 			
002.2	Clarification and challenge			
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trustees were happy with the cumulative style of reporting as it gives them the context for the work being done. 2. In respect of the partnership register, Trustees asked if it could include an indication of the level of priority of the partnership (eg crucial, essential, important for the community). The CEO undertook to add this to the register. 3. In response to a question from a Trustee around who is the target market for growth, the CEO indicated that it should cover all types of educational organisation. The key factor is that growth should be in the right direction, in the right areas and with the right partners. 4. Trustees endorsed the view that the timing of any growth was important. At this point in ATT's development we should be focusing strategically on schools which can add capacity and support our existing school improvement activities rather than seeking to take on schools in immediate difficulty. 5. One Trustee raised the point that the marketing of ATT should also be considered. It was important to show schools the value of being in our Trust. 			

	<p>6. There was a general discussion about the reports coming to the Board as there was concern about the volume of paper for this meeting. The following key points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ as a general rule reports should highlight and focus on the key areas of concern for the Board, ideally via an executive summary of key issues, with the details available to Trustees should they wish to delve deeper. ○ the information provided should enable effective strategic discussions to be held. ○ the DoCA has had positive feedback on the new draft agenda, agreed in December, which should enable everything which the Board needs to consider to be covered. ○ at FRC this morning, the format of reporting for ICT/Estates/Procurement was also discussed with a request for them to highlight the key points with an action plan for delivery. ○ the DoCA and CEO are working with ELT on the formats of reports moving forward. 				
	<p><i>Action</i></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="320 913 1374 1010"> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 913 421 1010">A02</td> <td data-bbox="421 913 1098 1010">Include coding system in partnership register to show priority level of partnership</td> <td data-bbox="1098 913 1230 1010">CEO</td> <td data-bbox="1230 913 1374 1010">When reviewed</td> </tr> </table>	A02	Include coding system in partnership register to show priority level of partnership	CEO	When reviewed
A02	Include coding system in partnership register to show priority level of partnership	CEO	When reviewed		
003	Performance - education				
003.1	<p><i>Annual Delivery Plan.</i></p> <p>The Board noted the contents of the Annual Delivery Plan for education.</p>				
003.2	<p><i>Ofsted Monitoring – SCA and RAV</i></p> <p>The papers had been previously circulated. The Chair invited MW to share her recent experience of an Ofsted monitoring to a school she is involved with, which is very similar to SCA. The following key points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ofsted will not take into account the pre-Christmas visit because it was not a monitoring visit. ● They will focus on leadership (which includes the Trust and governors) and the judgement will be either effective or ineffective. ● They need to hear clear and robust reasons as to why the leadership changed. ● They did not look at any data during the visit, and did not look at safeguarding in any depth either although they did look at how the school was being supported by the Trust through the COVID pandemic ie with remote learning, what is the engagement like, how have pupils been protected, what has been done about free school meals. ● They watched remote learning sessions live but these were also recorded so that they could play them back. ● They need to see evidence that Trustees have discussed the curriculum and have challenged where there have been issues. ● They need to see evidence that Trustees understand what the issues are. ● They will check the website in depth. 				

003.3	<p>Clarification and challenge</p> <p>In respect of SCA</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Chair of SOC was concerned about the points raised by the new RED (DT) in the report, especially the issues around the middle leaders and the lack of vision. She was concerned that it was now 2 years since it went into measures, and things are still not fixed. She also sought confirmation of when safeguarding was going to move out of the red category given that work on this had been a priority, and what plans were in place to improve the physical environment, especially the humanities area. 2. In response to the concerns raised above DT provided an update on progress made since he wrote the report. He felt it had been important to give his honest initial impressions and these have been shared with the leadership team. He noted that the new leadership team starting to gel but there is still a big gap between where the senior leaders are starting to get to and where the middle leaders, so work is still ongoing in that area. One of the main issues with the environment is not just about the estate but about the lack of ownership of the teaching areas - this is being addressed. There has also been significant and rapid improvement in safeguarding, which was the major area (80%) of concern in the Ofsted inspection. He thanked MW for the notes she made from her experience of the Ofsted visit which have been shared with all academies. SCA is preparing for inspection using the notes as the basis. If it were inspected now, it would be able to demonstrate a strengthening position in leadership but is not yet where it needs to be. 3. In response to the question raised about safeguarding, the DoS confirmed that there had been significant improvement against the AFIs. Based on the evidence seen by the DoS, SCA is now at 99% compliance (up from 63%) and is graded green, with the only caveat being that it has not been possible to test the culture in person. A report on the progress made at SCA will go to the next ARC meeting. 4. In response to the question raised about spend on the estate, the CFOO confirmed that £1.2m had been allocated for SCA which covered improvements to the science labs, the priority safeguarding work and the refurbishment of the classrooms, including the humanities area. Once the work has been done, staff must then take ownership of it and look after it. 5. Trustees stressed the need to highlight the risks/issues and what action was being taken to address them and welcomed the style of reporting on SCA for this meeting. They recognised that it is still important to show the positive work which was taking place but this must not then overshadow any areas of concern. 6. In response to a question from a Trustee about whether or not the middle management level can be transformed with the current people, DT noted that it was still too early to respond as he had not yet had a chance to meet with them. He is considering bringing in a shadow leadership team to help develop people and is coaching the senior leadership team to try to help them bring along the middle leaders. 7. Trustees noted that the Ofsted target date for coming out of serious weaknesses is December 2021. Ofsted have confirmed that the timetable stands despite the pandemic and that they will not accept the pandemic as a reason for improvements slowing down.
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	<p>In respect of RAV</p> <p>8. Trustees noted that, for RAV, the target date is June 2022 and that SV was comfortable that progress had been made against all the AFIs, with the exception of SEND, where there are still issues to be addressed.</p> <p>9. In terms of the reporting, Trustees were concerned that the report did not really highlight any deficiencies or weaknesses. As noted above, whilst it is good to show the positives, this must be alongside an honest and open acknowledgement of any risks and issues and what action needs to be taken.</p> <p>10. One Trustee suggested that a peer review of SCA and RAV might be helpful so that the Board can be assured that things are progressing and every necessary action is being taken. In response SV confirmed that RAV had not had any monitoring visit and would welcome a peer review.</p> <p>General</p> <p>11. The Chair asked if an HMI could take a school out of category before the target date. In response the CEO confirmed that a Section 8 inspection will be called, and if all parties agreed that, if they had a Section 5, it would be successful then the Section 8 could be converted to a Section 5 and the school could come of out category. The timing of a Section 5 tends to be negotiated between the HMI and the school.</p> <p>12. The Chair stressed the need for all the academies to be ready for inspection. In response the Chair of SOC confirmed that SOC are now starting to look at RI academies as well as SCA and RAV, with TNH being a particular focus.</p> <p>13. Further to the points noted about Trustees needing to be assured that the information they receive is accurate, relevant, up to date and honest, the Chair wondered if there was any way data/information could be moderated via some sort of peer review. In response the CEO noted that this was being looked at. The FAR process was in place but had been stymied because of the inability to visit academies in person. The REDs and the rest of ELT are looking at models of how to adapt the FARS to a remote process. The retired HMI who is working with RAV is also now working more broadly across the Trust and the CEO networks have also already agreed that they want to do peer reviews when circumstances allow.</p>
003.4	<p><i>SOC minutes and meeting update</i></p> <p>The Board received the SOC minutes of 6 January 2021.</p>
004	Performance - people
004.1	<p><i>Annual Delivery Plan</i></p> <p>The Board noted the contents of the Annual Delivery Plan for people.</p>
004.2	<p><i>Institute Progress</i></p> <p>The DoI presented the report previously circulated. She highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many MATs are using the word ‘institute’ to badge their internal CPD processes. If it was to be used in a formal company name, then it would be subject to a formal application process. • For ATT the institute is an umbrella term for all people development.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The aim is for it to be recognised as a professional body – however this can be done either with or without accredited body status. • ATT can deliver its own courses both internally and externally by partnering with existing accredited organisations. • If ATT were to go for accredited body status there would be a significant amount of work to be done for the application and beyond, and the DoI is not sure what would be gained from it given that ATT already has autonomy over our programmes and can partner with existing awarding bodies. • Trustees are asked to consider what the long term vision is for the institute and if Trustees want to go down the accrediting body route.
004.3	<p>Clarification and challenge</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Chair asked if there was a timescale for the establishment of formal institute status. In response, the DoI confirmed that no timescale had been set. 2. The CEO’s view is that she is now unconvinced of the benefit to be gained from being an accredited body. Research has shown that the amount of time and effort needed to gain accreditation seems to outweigh any benefits; commercially ATT is already working with respected accredited bodies; other organisations, such as TeachFirst, have been successful without being accredited. 3. The Chair noted that the original vision for the establishment of the institute was for it to be a mechanism to promote ATT values across our academies, our staff and our communities. The aim is for everyone to be able to access a platform for learning across all levels. 4. The DoI confirmed that the programmes are built around the needs of all stakeholders and work is continuing on developing parent/carer engagement. The curriculum offer is also informed by the school improvement dialogue. 5. Trustees endorsed the view that the amount of work needed to go for accredited status, and the work involved once it was accredited, did not seem to be worthwhile especially when there were opportunities to work with already accredited bodies to deliver ATT courses. 6. If not accredited, Trustees stressed the need to choose the right partners, to ensure that ATT would not be limited in what we could do in being able to develop our own courses, to ensure ATT retains autonomy and to ensure that our vision can be delivered. 7. Suggestions from Trustees included setting up research projects focussed on local issues and looking at the assessed teacher training route. 8. Trustees noted that the impact of the institute is being monitored by PAPP.
	<p>Resolution</p> <p>The Board agreed that ATT would not, at this stage, seek formal Institute status but would continue to develop the ATT Institute working in partnership with professionally accredited bodies.</p>
005	Performance – finance and operations
005.1	<p><i>Annual Delivery Plan</i></p> <p>The Board noted the contents of the Annual Delivery Plan for finance and operations.</p>

005.2	<p><i>Management Accounts</i></p> <p>The CFOO presented the report which had been previously circulated. This same report had been considered at the FRC meeting this morning. He drew Trustees' attention to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current forecast shows a predicted surplus of £148k, an improvement compared to the last forecast of a predicted deficit of £332k. • The improvement is due to cost savings from school closures, delayed recruitment and other cost saving measures, plus the receipt of COVID catch up funding, including covering the cost of free school meals. • The forecast is based on an assumption that all schools will be fully open 1 April 2021 but this may not be the case. • He believes that the likely deficit by the end of the year will be in the region of £400k, however, this could change given the fluidity of the current situation. • Monthly meetings are now taking place with ESFA. • In the recovery plan, confirmation has now been received from ESFA that it is not possible to convert the SCA capital grant into a revenue grant; discussions are also ongoing with ESFA regarding growth funding for 3 academies but the chances of getting this are slim given that ATT numbers as a whole have declined. • The situation will remain fluid for the rest of the academic year. Monthly management accounts will be issued to ensure Trustees are kept up to date.
005.3	<p>Clarification and challenge</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Chair of FRC confirmed that the situation was discussed at FRC this morning. In addition to the monthly management accounts, FRC have asked to be sent updates on a regular basis to ensure that they are kept fully informed of the ever changing situation. 2. In addition to the monthly accounts Trustees asked if they could also have a summary of best case/worst case scenarios. The CFOO undertook to provide this. 3. In response to a question from the Chair regarding the status of the additional COVID staff claim, the CFOO confirmed that he is awaiting an update from the HR team. 4. One Trustees questioned whether there was a freeze on recruitment across the board and, if so, what non-financial impact this would have on the organisation. In response the CFOO confirmed that it was not a hard freeze – any posts which are critical (eg teaching staff) would still be recruited to. 5. In response to a question about the Chartwell's contract, the CFOO confirmed the contract was being renegotiated. The loss position is likely to have improved following school closures and Chartwell's furloughing staff. 6. Trustees noted that FRC had discussed the Chartwell's contract in detail at their meeting this morning. They were satisfied with the service from Chartwell's during the pandemic and had agreed that changing the catering contract at this point in time was not the right thing to do. FRC had agreed that the contract should be extended for either 2 or 3 years with the proviso that the CFOO/DO renegotiate for better terms. 7. The Chair noted that the issue of the need for head office space should be borne in mind. In response the Chair of FRC confirmed that FRC would be doing a deep

	dive at its next meeting into the financial position of all of the areas of the Trust and this would include office space.			
005.4	<i>Action</i>			
	A03	Provide summary of best/worst case scenario with management accounts	CFOO	Monthly
005.5	<i>FRC minutes and meeting update</i> The Board received the FRC minutes of 2 December 2021.			
006	Risk and compliance			
006.1	<i>Safeguarding</i> The DoS presented the report which had been previously circulated. She provided an update on the changes since the paper was circulated and the following key points were noted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAV – resource has been put in to support them with their safeguarding improvements, including weekly intervention. Reviews will take place on 11 February and 11 March. • DUK – a lot of intervention has been put in place and significant progress has been made. They are due for a review on 24 February and are expected to go from red to green. • TNH - a lot of intervention has been put in place and improvements have been made around compliance which has increased by 38%. A new Safeguarding Manager is now in place. A review took place yesterday and they moved from red to amber. A deep dive into files will take place on 22 February. • CPOMS reviews have begun and are already helping to identify risks. A full report will be presented to ARC. • All EPs and REDs are receiving DSL training. Trustees have also attended safeguarding training. • ATT is leading the way in reviewing the cost of safeguarding. The issue of cost will be raised in a meeting with the DfE Keeping Children Safe (KCS) lead. 			
006.2	Clarification and challenge <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trustees thanked the DoS for arranging the safeguarding training with Jim Gamble. All agreed that it was an excellent session. The Chair thought it would be helpful for all staff to hear. 2. The Safeguarding Trustee felt that the training should reassure Trustees that ATT is tackling safeguarding in a very robust way. However it did raise a general concern about the erosion of multi-agency work in terms of what schools should/should not be responsible for. It is important to keep this on the radar. 3. Whilst acknowledging the great progress made in safeguarding one Trustee was concerned that SEND provision had not been discussed by Trustees in detail for some time. 4. In response to the above the RED, Primary West confirmed that REDs were looking at vulnerability around SEND both in regard to the curriculum but also its strategic direction across the Trust, and how to weave this into the work of the institute in providing training. It was noted that this needs to be formalised so that Trustees have evidence of the work being done. 			

	<p>5. The Chair of SOC proposed that there should be a Trustee responsible for SEND in the same way that there is a Safeguarding Trustee. This will be picked up under item 7.1 and 7.2 of the agenda.</p>
006.3	<p><i>ARC minutes and meeting update</i></p> <p>The Board received the minutes of the ARC meeting held on 2 December 2021. The Chair of ARC drew Trustees' attention to the following:</p> <p>In respect of safeguarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARC have focused on culture and metrics. The DoS has only been in post for one year and progress has been made but, moving forward they would like to see significant further steps being made. • Metrics are being developed and costs are also being considered. • ARC were surprised and concerned about the lack of compliance in safeguarding in some academies. They would expect all academies to be close to 100% compliance. This is being addressed by the DoS. <p>In respect of finance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARC were pleased to see a clean audit this year with no major issues, evidence of the significant progress made by the CFOO and his team. • Any minor points highlighted in the audit will be dealt with and should be cleared by the time of the next audit. • It was right to make the maximum provision for the holiday pay. <p>In respect of the risk register/internal audit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The focus for the coming term will be on strategic risk. • The internal audit plan includes the vitally important area of cyber security and its links to GDPR. The DICT has a clear brief about what the audit needs to look at and it is hoped that it may be ready for consideration by ARC at its next meeting. This is recognised as one of the main risk areas for ATT. • Whether internal audit can play a part in assisting with the governance aspects of educational improvement is being considered.
006.4	<p>Clarification and challenge</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Chair was pleased to see that cyber security is being looked at. 2. The Chair asked if ARC would be looking at the specific risk register which it is assumed will be in place for the new digital project. The Chair of ARC stated his confidence in the DICT to lead the project in a very risk focused way and that ARC would get involved in monitoring risk as it would with any major investment project.
007	Corporate Matters
007.1	<p><i>Safeguarding Lead Trustee</i></p> <p>The DoCA presented the report which had been previously circulated. He drew Trustees' attention to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions about a year ago on governance models and having a more 'expert' based model had been put on hold. It was now perhaps timely to reconsider this. • The LACs have 3 Trustee lead roles in Safeguarding, SEN and Disadvantaged Students, and it may be that these could be replicated at Board level alongside the Trustee links with academies as outlined in item 7.3.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The immediate pressing need is to replace DT with a new Safeguarding Trustee who would need to have the necessary expertise in this field. The DoCA has begun the recruitment process looking as widely as possible to find someone with the right skills. • There will also need to be an interim solution as it will take time to recruit the right person. Thereafter consideration could be given to expanding specific roles for Trustees, as noted above.
007.2	<p>Clarification and challenge</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Chair of ARC strongly endorsed the view of the DoCA that it was critical to have someone with right level of expertise in safeguarding to fulfil the role of Safeguarding Trustee and someone who could take on the mantle of the strategic lead for that area. 2. Trustees noted that it may be necessary to appoint more than one person to the role if the right skills and expertise could not be found in one appointee. 3. Trustees agreed that it was important to cover the role on an interim basis but only until the appropriate expert is appointed. Both SJ and BD have offered to take on the interim role. As the preference is for ARC to have three members, it was agreed that BD should join that committee and become the interim Safeguarding Trustee. 4. The DoCA was grateful for the suggestions for contacts being put forward during the meeting.
007.3	<p>Resolution</p> <p>The Board agreed to the appointment of Bernard Dickenson as the interim Safeguarding Trustee, once the current Safeguarding Trustee steps down from the Board. The interim appointment to be in place until such time as an expert replacement is appointed.</p>
007.4	<p><i>Trustees engagement with academies</i></p> <p>The DoCA presented the report which had been previously circulated. He proposed that the links with academies are made across a cluster of academies rather than on an individual academy basis. He would like the Board to start to think about the idea of lead responsibilities including SEN which had come up in earlier discussions.</p> <p>He was seeking agreement in principle from Trustees on the proposal outlined in his paper and he would then work up the detail with the Clerk.</p>
007.5	<p>Clarification and challenge</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One Trustee asked if the skill set of each Trustee would be taken into account when deciding on which academy to be linked to. In response the DoCA said he would bear this in mind. 2. In response to a question from a Trustee, the DoCA confirmed he would take into account the geographical location of individual Trustees. 3. Trustees thought it would be a good idea for each to have links to both primary and secondary so they get the chance to experience the full range of academies. 4. Trustees endorsed the proposed links with academies as a positive step forward and proposed that Board meetings could perhaps be held at individual academies once it was possible to have face to face meetings again. The DoCA

	confirmed that the idea of touring sub-committees, which had been put on hold due to the pandemic, could be expanded to include Board meetings.			
	5. In response to a question from the Chair, the DoCA confirmed that there would be clear terms of reference and guidance for the visits.			
007.6	Resolution The Board approved the approach to engagement with academies as outlined in the paper.			
007.7	Action			
	A04	Produce a plan for the Trustee link programme including terms of reference/guidance	DoCA	Before next Board meeting
008	Matters for approval			
008.1	<i>Admissions Policy 2022-2023</i> The Admissions Policy 2022-2023 had been previously circulated. The DoCA drew Trustees' attention to the fact that it is a statutory requirement to review the Admissions Policy annually. Formal consultation, which must be done every seven years, had also been taken place with the results included in the report.			
008.2	Resolution The Board approved the Admissions Policy 2022-2023.			
009	Any other business			
009.1	There was none.			
	<i>The meeting ended at 15.15</i>			

Date of next business meeting:

24 March 2021

10:00 to 16:00 – format to be confirmed

MSTEAMS

Action log

A01	Financial review of 6 th Form Provision to come to the Board	CFOO	Next Board meeting, if possible
A02	Include coding system in partnership register to show priority level of partnership	CEO	When next reviewed
A03	Provide summary of best/worst case scenario with the management accounts	CFOO	Monthly
A04	Produce a plan for the Trustee link programme including terms of reference/guidance	DoCA	Before next Board meeting