

Meeting of the Academy Transformation Trust Board

24 March 2021

10:00 to 12:10

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
Simon Jones (from Item 7)	SJ	Trustee
Phil Milligan	PJM	Trustee
Alistair Milne	AM	Trustee
Richard Priestley	RP	Trustee
Margaret Wilson	MW	Trustee
Attendees	Initials	Position
Debbie Clinton	DC	CEO
Peter Wilson	PW	CFOO
Abby Bayford	Abs	Director of Institute (DoI)
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
Observers	Initials	Position
Caroline Saxelby	CS	Exec Principal Walton Academy and Queen Elizabeth's Academy
Apologies	Initials	Position
Michaela Jackson	MJ	Trustee

Minutes

ITEM	Detail
001	Routine business
001.1	<i>Apologies for absence</i> Apologies were received and accepted from MJ. SJ had sent his apologies although he hoped he may be able to join the meeting at some point. The meeting was quorate. Trustees noted that Caroline Saxelby will be joining the meeting as a silent observer.
001.2	<i>Declarations of interest</i> There were no declarations of interest for this meeting.

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> There were no matters arising. All actions were completed or are covered on the agenda. The Chair advised the Board that there was one matter of Any Other Business which needed to be discussed in closed session at the end of the meeting. All members of ELT, apart from the CEO and DoCA, were to leave the meeting at that point on the agenda.
001.5	<i>Chair's action since the last meeting</i> The Board noted the Chair's action as outlined in the report from the DoCA.
002	Strategic Considerations
002.1	<i>CEO Report</i> Trustees received and noted the report which had been previously circulated. The CEO drew Trustees' attention to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National guidance from examination boards is expected by next Wednesday and will include a template policy which all schools have to submit to the examination boards. ATT has already developed its own guidance but this will now not be issued until the template has been received to ensure that it includes all the statutory requirements. • The virtual panel discussion, hosted in the UAE, around international education sadly highlighted the bad reputation English education has internationally, especially around the qualification arrangements. The CEO will feed this back to the National Schools Commissioner when she meets him this week. • The timing of the guidance on examinations is a matter of great concern. • The Acting Principal in Westbourne Academy has been appointed as the Principal.
003	Performance - education
003.1	<i>Key developments report</i> Trustees received and noted the report which had been previously circulated.
003.2	<i>Ofsted Monitoring – SCA and RAV</i> Trustees received and noted the report which had been previously circulated.
003.3	Clarification and challenge General <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On a point of clarification Trustees noted that the inspections were Additional Monitoring Visits rather than formal inspections. 2. The RED (SE) confirmed that a detailed report on SEND had been discussed at the last meeting of SOC. The report stressed the important of SEND provision as a key factor in Ofsted judgements and considered how it might be resourced moving forward. 3. In response to a question from the Chair regarding the management of SEND provision, the CEO confirmed that this is currently being reviewed. The RED (SE) and the RED (PE) are in the process of carrying out a full audit and review of SEND provision which will inform decisions about the resources/structures needed moving forward. The outcomes of the review will be considered at SOC in June.

	<p>4. The Chair asked what lessons has been learnt from the monitoring inspections at SCA and RAV. The responses are noted below.</p> <p>In respect of SCA – on site inspection</p> <p>5. The RED (SW)’s impression of the inspection was that it was rigorous, along the lines of what a Section 5 inspection might be. It was a very useful learning experience.</p> <p>6. The RED (SW) explained that the link between SEND and curriculum stood out, especially at KS3, and drove the agenda in every meeting. He confirmed that a new highly experienced SENDCO had now been appointed.</p> <p>7. Trustees noted that Ofsted had high expectations of secondaries teaching reading and being able to deliver phonics. They wanted to see evidence of a strong catch up programme for reading.</p> <p>8. MW, the link Trustee for the inspection, confirmed that she had been questioned closely about SEND provision at SCA. SEND is clearly high on the agenda for Ofsted and something which Trustees need to be fully aware of.</p> <p>9. MW felt it was a very rigorous inspection and was grateful for having received detailed briefing notes prior to the visit from the Executive, which is something she would encourage for future inspections.</p> <p>In respect of RAV -remote inspection</p> <p>1. PB, who was the link Trustee for the inspection, confirmed that the inspection had provided reassurance that RAV was on the right track with improvements, which was encouraging for the staff involved.</p> <p>2. PB endorsed the view of MW regarding the helpfulness of receiving good briefing notes prior to the visit.</p> <p>3. The RED (PE) noted that Ofsted were understanding of the challenges created by the pandemic. They did not have in mind a specific way in which remote learning should be done but focused on the rationale behind the decisions made, which RAV were able to provide.</p> <p>4. The RED (PE) confirmed that SEND was always looked at in inspections but was of particular focus at RAV as it had been identified as an area for improvement.</p>
003.4	<p><i>SOC minutes and meeting update</i></p> <p>The Chair of SOC summarised the SOC minutes of 3 March 2021 for the Board. The Board received and noted the minutes.</p>
004	Performance - people
004.1	<p><i>Key developments report</i></p> <p>Trustees received and noted the report which had been previously circulated.</p>
004.2	<p>Clarification and challenge</p> <p>1. The Chair of PAPP confirmed that he was happy with the pace at which the HR agenda was moving forward.</p> <p>2. Trustees noted that HR metrics needed to be looked over a longer period of time than would normally be the case, given the unusual circumstances this year.</p>
004.3	<p><i>PAPP minutes and meeting update</i></p> <p>The Board received and noted the PAPP minutes of 3 March 2021.</p>

005	Performance – finance and operations
005.1	<p><i>Key developments report</i></p> <p>Trustees received and noted the report which had been previously circulated.</p>
005.2	<p>Clarification and challenge</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Chair of FRC confirmed that the priority had been to ensure testing was in place and effective for the return of students. He was pleased to see good progress being made on capital projects. 2. In response to a question from the Chair, the CEO confirmed that ATT owns all the laptops which had been lent to students. She further confirmed that rigorous protocols and agreements were in place for the loan of laptops, and a significant amount of risk management had been undertaken, which was scrutinised by ARC. 3. One Trustee noted that SOC had raised the question of what happened in the case of loss, breakages or misuse of laptops. 4. Trustees noted that the DfE allocation had enabled ATT to give every child who needed it access to IT at home, and for such provision to be sustained over a long period of time. 5. One Trustee asked when the sale of land at Hathaway would be progressed. The CFOO confirmed that the DO was proceeding with this and the sale was likely to be next year.
005.3	<p><i>Management Accounts</i></p> <p>Trustees received and noted the report which had been previously circulated.</p>
005.4	<p>Clarification and challenge</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One Trustee questioned why blended learning spend was being reduced. In response the CFOO confirmed that it was purely a timing issue as the funds set aside for blended learning will not all be spent this year. The CEO confirmed that this cost centre did include the #TransformingLearning initiative. 2. In response to a question from a Trustee about what impact there will be on the deficit if sports facilities do not open, the CFOO advised that it is anticipated that the facilities will be open at half capacity from 1 April. The full impact on the deficit is not know as we don't yet know how many people will use the facilities once they do reopen. 3. Trustees questioned why 10% of the COVID catch up funding was retained at the centre and asked if this would be better spent directly in the academies. In response the CFOO explained that this money was part of the operational budget and used to cover the cost of additional cleaning and PPE in academies. The CEO advised Trustees that these were costs for which no specific additional funding had been provided but which had to be paid in order for the academies to meet the statutory and legal requirements to be able to open. 4. One Trustee asked if the regulators would be concerned by ATT's projected deficit. In response the CFOO assured the Board that the ESFA have not indicated that they have any issues with this – they understand that MATs underspent last year and are overspending this year so are more likely to look at finances across this 2 year period. The Chair of FRC endorsed this view confirming that ATT was still well ahead of its agreed recovery plan. 5. The Chair of FRC drew Trustees' attention to the budget for next year, for which the first round of submissions had been received from academies. An overall deficit is

	<p>projected but these budgets have not yet been scrutinised. They needed to be looked at in terms of affordability of any pay increases, stripping out the costs relating to the pandemic to give a 'normalised' starting point, ATT priorities and the fall in student numbers. ELT will be reviewing them in detail over the next few weeks and FRC will then look in detail at each academy at its meeting in April with an update being provided to the Board at its next meeting.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. One Trustee was surprised not to see major savings on consumables and staffing costs given that the academies were closed. The Chair of FRC endorsed this view – this will be looked at by FRC at its next meeting when looking at each academy in detail. 7. Trustees were concerned about falling pupil numbers and asked why this was and what was being done to address it. In response the CEO advised that free schools were part of the issue but there was also some concern about the accuracy of pupil projections –this is being looked at in detail by ELT and will be discussed with ARC. 8. In response to a suggestion from a Trustee that central costs should also be looked at when looking at academies' costs, the Chair of FRC confirmed that they will be part of the review.
006	Risk and compliance
006.1	<p><i>Key risks report</i></p> <p>Trustees received and noted the key risks register which had been previously circulated. In the absence of the Chair of ARC, the Vice Chair of ARC drew Trustees' attention to the fact that ARC had looked at the comprehensive overall Trust Risk Register in detail and, from that, the key strategic risks register was being developed. He stressed the importance of the Board taking time to look at the strategic risk register so that it could be shaped to meet its needs.</p>
006.2	<p>Clarification and challenge</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In response to a question from the Chair, the Vice Chair of ARC confirmed that he was happy with the direction in which the strategic risk register was going in. It was important that the Board feel ownership of it and review it at every meeting.
006.3	<p><i>Safeguarding</i></p> <p>Trustees received and noted the report which had been previously circulated.</p>
006.4	<p><i>ARC minutes and meeting update</i></p> <p>The Board received and noted the minutes of the ARC meeting held on 10 March 2021.</p>
007	Corporate Matters
007.1	<p><i>External review of governance</i></p> <p>Trustees received and noted the report which had been previously circulated.</p>
007.2	<p>Clarification and challenge</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In response to a request from a Trustee that as many Board members as possible be included in the review, the DoCA confirmed that he would ensure that all Board members were included. 2. One Trustee asked if the review would come up with recommendations or if it was just a key findings report. The DoCA confirmed that, at the end of the process, ATT will meet with the reviewers to see what the next steps might be.

007.3	<i>Trustees' engagement with academies</i>			
	Trustees received and noted the report which had been previously circulated.			
007.4	Clarification and challenge			
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One Trustee was concerned that the link Trustee role was a more formal role than he had expected. In response the DoCA stated that it was not meant to be the case and it may just be that the language used may not have made that clear. The proposal had come out of discussions last year where the Board were keen to establish Board to classroom links so he was trying to strike the right balance of between formal/informal engagement. 2. In response to Trustee suggestions, the DoCA will ensure that Trustees who already have a relationship with an academy in category would remain as the link Trustee as long as that academy remains in category. The link Trustee would be the person who would meet with Ofsted in any inspection. 3. Trustees asked what Principals would gain from such links and how they viewed them. In response the DoCA clarified that, when Trustees are at the point of agreeing, in principle, to what they would like to do in respect of links with the academies, the next stage would be to discuss it with academy leaders. The process is not designed to be an 'inspection' but more an opportunity to increase engagement between the Board and the academies. 4. One Trustee stressed the importance of Trustees having an oversight of what is happening in academies in the interests of strong governance. 5. Trustees who had been involved on recruitment panels for senior posts had found it to be an extremely helpful learning experience. 6. The CEO welcomed Trustees links with academies. Trustees experience, even if not in education, brings a different perspective. They are not there to quality assure education but can provide an insight into how effective leadership is and how well systems and procedures are being followed. 7. Many Trustees broadly endorsed the proposal. The Chair and the DoCA will discuss the proposal further after the meeting taking into account Trustee comments. 			
007.5	Action			
	A01	Review trustee links with academies proposal and bring back to the Board	DoCA/ Chair	Board 12 May 2021
007.6	<i>Governance conference</i>			
	Trustees noted that the virtual Governance conference will take place on Wednesday 9 June 2021.			
008	Specific additional matters			
008.1	<i>Review of post-16 provision</i>			
	Trustees received and noted the report which had been previously circulated. The DoCA advised Trustees that the aim of report was to provide an update of where we are at in terms of reviewing provision. FRC are due to look in more detail at the financial aspects of the provision at their next meeting.			
008.2	Clarification and challenge			
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In response to a question from the Chair of SOC, the DoCA confirmed that the detailed report will be considered at Board level rather than by SOC. 			

	2. Trustees recognised the important of the post 16 strategy but accepted that it had been put on hold temporarily due to the focus on managing the challenges presented by the pandemic.
009	Matters for approval
009.1	There were none.
0010	Any other business
0010.1	<i>Star Academy Admissions</i> The DoCA asked Trustees to note that Star Academy would continue to use the current Admissions Policy until next year rather than the new Policy which was agreed at the last Board meeting. This is because the consultation on the new Policy for Star was not as wide-spread as it should have been. Star will move to the new Policy once the full consultation is complete.
	<i>ELT, apart from the CEO and DoCA, and CS left the meeting at this point and the Board went into confidential session.</i>
0010.2	This item is confidential and is minuted separately
	<i>The meeting ended at 12.11</i>

Date of next business meeting:

12 May 2021
12:30 to 15:30
MSTEAMS

M Beckett

Signed by Chair

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Date.....12th May 2021.....

Action log

A01	Review trustee links with academies proposal and bring back to the Board	DoCA/ Chair	Board meeting 12 May 2021
A02	See Confidential minutes		