

Meeting of the Academy Transformation Trust Board

30 March 2022

12:30pm to 14:00pm

Venue: MSTEAMS

Board members	Initial	Position
Pat Beanland	PB	Chair
Tom Clark	TC	Vice-Chair
Elaine Bonar	EB	Trustee
Tania Craig	TCr	Trustee
Louise Jones	LJ	Trustee
Alistair Milne	AM	Trustee
Attendees	Initials	Position
Richard Elms	RE	Interim CEO
Derek Trimmer	DT	NED (Item 003 only)
Peter Wilson	PW	ANFOD (Item 004 only)
Amber Fitch	Clerk	Governance Officer

Minutes

ITEM	Detail
001	Routine business
001.1	<p><i>Welcome to new Trustee</i></p> <p>On behalf of the Board, the Chair welcomed Louise Jones to her first Board meeting. The Chair also noted that one further new Trustee was in the process of having their appointment confirmed.</p> <p>The Chair also apologised to Trustees for the late submission of papers relating to items 004 & 005 (uploaded to annex folder); it was noted that Trustees may not have had the time to fully digest these documents prior to the meeting.</p>
001.2	<p><i>Apologies for Absence</i></p> <p>Apologies were received and consented for Mark Gill & Diane Elleman. The meeting was quorate.</p>
001.3	<p><i>Declarations of interest for this meeting</i></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest for this meeting.</p>
001.4	<p><i>Minutes of the last meeting</i></p> <p>The minutes of the last meeting held on 8th February 2022 were agreed as accurate and accepted.</p>
001.5	<p><i>Matters arising and actions</i></p> <p>An update on actions was provided as follows:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A01 – The Chair thanked DT, NED for providing the academy summaries to Trustees for information; these were found to be useful in order to keep Trustees informed. • A02 – It was noted that the Pay Policy would be discussed as part of item 002.1. • A03 – It was noted that staff absence data was included in the CEO report as part of item 002.1 • A04 – Trustees were advised that FE review feedback to EB was in hand. • A05 – The Chair highlighted that the SOC had considered academy Pupil Premium statements and that all academies had published the statutory information to their websites by 31.12.21. • A06 – The Risk Register was on the agenda for discussion. • A07 – A verbal report from the AGM was on the agenda for discussion. • A08 – Trustees were advised that an external consultant had been appointed to support the Admissions Policy process. It was noted that the responsibility to review and publish the policy within the required timescales sat with individual academy Principals.
002	Strategic Considerations
002.1	<p><i>CEO Report</i></p> <p>Trustees noted the Interim CEO’s report that had been shared prior to the meeting. RE, Interim CEO highlighted the below key points for Trustees –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) <u>Pay Policy 2022/23</u> – It was noted that the MAT Pay Policy was being reviewed to go live from 1st September 2022. The new policy aimed to be more fit for purpose, fair and transparent; as well as providing clarify on the use UPS applications, TLRs and performance management procedures (to be an all-year-round exercise, rather than 3 times throughout a year in order to make sound judgements). Trustees were advised that ‘Blue Sky’ was currently being used by academies to record performance management targets and reviews however, the IQ system had been piloted this year with positive feedback from participating academies. The new policy would also focus on the DfE Teaching Standards to provide clear expectations and actions for any underperformance of teaching staff. b) <u>Beck Row Academy Tribunal update</u> – Trustees were advised that the SEND tribunal had taken place on 16th & 23rd March 2022. The CEO felt that the hearing had been fair in holding all parties to account and was hopeful that a satisfactory outcome would be issued by the Judge. It was noted that the Barrister acting on behalf of the MAT was collating final representation for submission; this would be shared with Trustees for approval beforehand. Thanks were recorded to Mrs Sarah Shayler & Mrs Lesley Brennan, who well represented the academy during proceedings. c) <u>Iceni academies</u> – Trustees were reminded of their decision to split the Iceni primary and secondary academies in to two entities in December 2019. It was noted however that following this decision, Ofsted had visited the academies in January 2022 to undertake a full Section 8 inspection and had inspected the academies as one entity; the outcome of which had judged the settings as RI. The CEO felt it was illogical to continue to separate the academies due to their location, no progress being made by the MAT to formally separate the academies and Ofsted judging the academies as one entity. Trustees were therefore asked to revoke their decision in December 2019 to separate the academies. d) <u>Update on LGBs</u> – The Vice-Chair reported on the review of the effectiveness of LGBs. Following the reviews, the following findings were reported – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effectiveness of LGBs across the Trust was ‘patchy’.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LGB structure for some academies was deemed to be too small for some settings. • There were challenges in recruiting new governors. • There was a common perception via LGBs that information / communication relating to academy finances were not being reported via the Trust Finance Team (Trustees noted however that the Scheme of Delegation did not currently delegate any financial responsibilities to LGBs). • Persistent absence (PA) was both a MAT and national issue, as well as falling rolls. • The Board Chair, Vice-Chair and Sam Elms, Head of Governance would be meeting to discuss proposed changes to LGBs from 1st September 2022; a report of which would be submitted at the next Board meeting. <p>Thanks were recorded to Trustees who had supported the LGB review process.</p>
002.2	<p>Clarification and challenge</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Following a query on when the draft 2022/23 Pay Policy would be presented to Trustees, the Interim CEO advised that this would be reviewed by the newly appointed HR Lead and submitted at the next Board meeting for discussion. 2. A Trustee asked if teaching staff not meeting the expectations outlined in the DfE Teachers Standards would be subject to capability procedures. They were advised that this judgement would be made by academy Principals. 3. A Trustee asked if teaching staff performance management targets were expected to be linked to the MAT priorities; they were advised that this was the case, as well as being linked to individual academy priorities. 4. Following a query on the performance management procedures in place for academy Support Staff and the MAT Central Team, the CEO reported that central team staff were not included in the IQ system pilot and were on spot salaries. Academy Support Staff performance management procedures were the same as that for teaching staff. 5. A Trustee asked if reference to the MAT Central Team staff could be included in the new Pay Policy; this would be added. 6. A Trustee asked how Trustees could be assured that performance management procedures and any pay increased for Central Team staff had been robustly considered. The CEO explained that Principals were currently either on a 7-point scale or a spot salary; this did not reflect the leadership and management pay spine, but current salaries did reflect the numbers on roll at each academy. The new policy would aim to move all Principals to a 7-point scale in line with the School Teachers Review Body. Central Team staff would remain on spot salaries, with any alterations / recommendations to increase pay approved by the Chair and / or Vice-Chair of the Board. Overall, it was anticipated that these changes would reduce central salary costs (compared to those in 2020/21). 7. A Trustee asked for clarification on the procedures in place to check pay changes for those staff on spot salaries. The CEO highlighted that the Financial Scheme of Delegation was in place and that responsibility for reviewing the pay of senior posts sat with Trustees / FRC. A Trustee requested that this information be added to the 2022/23 policy. 8. A Trustee questioned if pay inequality was being considered for the 2022/23 Pay Policy. The CEO stated that this was being considered as there were discrepancies in pay across all academies, as well as the use of TLRs. 9. Trustees agreed performance management procedures should be conducted all year-round but questioned how this would be recorded / evidence. The CEO stated that this

	<p>was the responsibility of Principals to manage, with oversight via Trustees. ‘Blue Sky’ would be used by academies to record and monitor regular feedback on staff performance.</p> <p>10. A Trustee asked if the remunerations committee would act as a ‘safety net’ in relation to the review of staff pay increased; this was confirmed as outlined in the current pay policy.</p> <p>11. A Trustee asked if the MAT could review the pay of primary and secondary academy staff compared to national averages. The CEO agreed to pursue this task.</p> <p>12. A Trustee requested that an Equality Impact assessment be added to the 2022/23 Pay Policy.</p> <p>13. A Trustee requested that the draft 2022/23 Pay Policy be circulated to Trustees for review / comment as soon as it was available / prior to the next meeting.</p> <p>14. A Trustee asked what the MAT legal costs had amounted to in relation to the Beck Row Academy Tribunal. They were advised that costs were substantial however, the bulk of these would be reimbursed via insurers. The CEO advised that the MAT were unable to reclaim legal costs, even if the outcome was in favour of the MAT.</p> <p>15. A Trustees questioned if the legal costs for the Tribunal had been budgeted for this financial year. They were advised that this was the case.</p> <p>16. A Trustee asked if an Executive Head was in place across the Icenii academies; they were advised that this was not the case however, progress was being made to create joint leadership and finances.</p> <p>17. The CEO was asked to confirm that no progress had been made by the MAT to separate the Icenii primary and secondary academies in to separate entities. The CEO confirmed that no formal processes / applications had been made to separate the academies since the decision was made by Trustees in December 2019.</p> <p>18. A Trustee asked if a restructure would take place across the Icenii academies to create a joint leadership team. The CEO advised that this would be considered however relations between the academy leaders needed to be take priority at this time. A Trustees suggested that the MAT consider a co-Principal model as this worked well at Passmores Academy in Essex.</p>																
002.3	<p>Resolution</p> <p>Trustees AGREED to revoke the decision made at the December 2019 Board meeting to separate the Icenii academies in to separate entities and that these should remain as an all-through academy.</p>																
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	A06	Proposals on changes to LGB from 1.9.22 to be brought to the next meeting	TC / Clerk	Next meeting
003	Performance – education			
003.1	<p><i>Report from SOC on 9th March 2022, including key developments & academy categorization</i></p> <p>DT, NED joined the meeting at 13.22pm to report on this agenda item.</p> <p>Trustees were advised of the release of the White Paper (education) and Green Paper (SEND); DT advised that summary of each document would be sent to Trustees for information.</p> <p>DT also provided an update on academy categorization as outlined below. It was reported that some FARs had been delayed due to increased cases of Covid19 at some academies impacting staffing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>THA</u> – FAR taking place on 31.03.2022. • <u>GRE</u> – Significant improvements had been made in Phonics and Reading in Key Stage 1 (KS1). • <u>WES</u> – Significantly improved across the board. • <u>ICA</u> – The secondary provision had shown significant improvements however, standards had dipped in the primary phase, particularly in behaviour. Mildenhall College was offering additional support. • <u>PHO</u> – FAR postponed however, TC and Bobbie Caisley (BC), Acting Director of Primary Improvement had recently visited the academy and provided positive feedback. • <u>RAV</u> – The FAR had taken place on 29.03.2022 and good progress was identified. BC continued to support the academy and had observed improvements in assessments and teaching of Phonics, Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision and SEND provision. Phonics at KS2 was an area of focus. • <u>SCA</u> – A CSI had been completed and included a review of the quality of teaching in Science, which had improved significantly in relation to consistency in teaching and marking. Maths and English provisions had also improved towards a judgement of ‘good’. Items of focus now related to Senior Leaders, challenges between staff members and communication. <p>Trustees thanked DT for his report.</p>			
003.2	<p>Clarification and challenge</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Following a query on when ICA was due their next full Ofsted inspection, DT reported that this was expected around March 2024. It was reported that significant improvements had already been made as Middle Leaders were now well supported and proactive Phonics Leader was in place. Areas of focus included SEND, Reading and attendance. 2. A Trustee asked if sufficient teacher assessments procedures were in place at ICA; they were advised that this was the case and that a progress report would be issued at the next SOC meeting for discussion. 3. A Trustee requested that future reports expand on acronyms to assist new Trustees; this would be actioned. 			

	4. A Trustee highlighted that persistent absence of White British Boys remained a national issue; Trustees noted that this continued to be high on academy and Trust agendas.												
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004	Performance – finance and operations												
004.1	<p><i>Management accounts</i></p> <p>Peter Wilson, ANFOD joined the meeting at 1.44pm to report on this item.</p> <p>Trustees noted that there had been no meeting of the FRC since 2nd February 2022 (minutes of which had been shared at the last Board meeting).</p> <p>PW drew Trustees attention to 6+6 forecast document which had been submitted late. It was highlighted that there was positive cashflow and a balanced position at year end, with a surplus of £48k. These figures included variances within educational supplies, figures of which were expected to improve. Trustee were also reminded that the deadline for staff resignation was 31st May 2022.</p>												
004.2	<p>Clarification and challenge</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Following a query on the year-to-date surplus of £48k, PW explained that a target had been set in relation to staff savings however this was unachievable in-year. A Trustee asked for the rationale behind the staff savings target. They were advised that this was an estimated figure based on the percentage of the overall budget spent on staffing costs; the aim was to reduce this from 81% to 79% however, no formal plans to achieve this had yet been drafted. PW was asked to explain the impact on the end of year position due to variances within the budget year to date. Trustees were advised that the £48k surplus should increase. Trustees asked for assurance that the end of year surplus had considered the staff saving target; PW confirmed this was the case. A Trustee asked if the reduced staff costs in 2022/23 would neutralise the in-year deficit. PW advised that there was a projected surplus at year end; meaning that there would be no in-year deficit in 2022/23. Reserves funds had also increased. A Trustee asked if a formal plan would be put in place to achieve the staff savings target in 2022/23. They were advised that a formal plan was required. 												
004.3	<p><i>Update on introduction of new financial model</i></p> <p>PW was pleased to report that the new financial model 2022/23 had begun on 29.03.2022 and had included expected increases, assumptions and GAG funding. The model would feed into the ISP model and reporting would be simplified and reduced to bi-monthly.</p> <p>PW drew Trustees attention to the Internal Scrutiny Programme report which had also been submitted late to the Board. It was noted that an internal audit on Data Protection had already been undertaken and a subsequent action plan draw up to address any recommendations made. Trustees noted the areas proposed for internal scrutiny by 2024/25.</p> <p>Trustees were also provided with an update on MIS in where it was noted that procurement procedures were underway and a decision on how to proceed would be made on 25.05.22. It was noted that Mark Gill, Trustee and Chair of ARC would be meeting with PW on 31.05.22 to discuss the proposals.</p>												

004.4	<p>Clarification and challenge</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Trustee asked if academies had been made aware of the new financial model. PW confirmed that meetings had been held with all Principals to inform them of the changes and that academy staff would be trained on the use of ISP in April 2022. 2. A Trustee challenged the reduced budget reporting to become bi-monthly due to the gaps this could create in accurate monitoring. PW advised that Trustees were legally required to receive 6 budget reports per year, which would be met. Should the new simplified systems allow; monthly reports would continue to be issued. 3. A Trustee questioned why there was a gap of 4-years for the internal scrutiny of Cyber Security. PW stated that this was due to strong controls being in place and regular scrutiny therefore not deemed necessary. 4. A Trustee asked why the scrutiny of cashflow was proposed to take place in 2023/24. They were advised that new systems were being embedded in 2022/23 so this allowed time for systems to be fully in place. 																
004.5	<p>Resolution</p> <p>Trustees AGREED to delegate responsibility to MG, Chair of ARC to approve the MIS recommendations on behalf of the Board.</p>																
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<p>005 Risk and compliance</p>																	
005.1	<p><i>Report from ARC on 16th March 2022, including Risk Register & Safeguarding update</i></p> <p>Trustees noted the minutes which had been circulated. EB highlighted the topics of conversation in the absence of the ARC Chair which included a focus on internal / external scrutiny, persistent absence, risk register and the pay policy.</p> <p>It was noted that the ARC proposed to add the Risk Register as a standard agenda item for all committees for feedback and monitoring purposes; the ARC would, however, continue to lead on the risk register in line with the internal scrutiny programme. Trustees supported this approach and were invited to send any comments to the ARC Chair in advance of the next ARC meeting.</p>																
005.2	<p>Clarification and challenge</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Trustee asked if the MAT had a Risk Management policy / strategy in place. They were advised that this was the case and that the documents could be shared with Trustees for information. 																
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006	Corporate Matters			
006.1	<p><i>Verbal update from Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 9th March 2022</i></p> <p>The Chair reported verbally on the AGM held on 09.03.22 which had been attended by 3 Members and the Interim CEO. New Trustees had been provided with a verbal update on the current MAT position, the annual accounts had been approved as well as the auditors for the 2022/23 financial year (Bishop Fleming LLP). Members had also requested to receive copies of future Board minutes in order to keep well informed.</p> <p>The Chair also reported that Tom Clark, Vice-Chair had been reappointed by the Members for another 4-year term from 01.11.2022 – 01.11.2026.</p>			
006.2	Action			
	Action	Description of task	Who	When
	A13	To share future BoT minutes with Members for information	Clerk	Ongoing
007	Matters for approval			
007.1	<p><i>Modern Slavery Statement</i></p> <p>The document had been shared prior to the meeting however, the Chair proposed to defer this item to the next meeting for the statement to be further reviewed. Trustees AGREED this proposal.</p>			
007.2	Action			
	Action	Description of task	Who	When
	A14	Modern Slavery Statement to be an item on the next agenda	Clerk	Next BoT
008	Any other business			
008.1	<p><i>Recruitment of a new Member</i></p> <p>The Chair stated that an additional Member was required due to there currently being odd numbers appointed. Due to only one Member being a Trustee; it was noted that a further Trustee could be appointed as a Member (in line with the Articles of Association). Trustees were asked to consider volunteering to be appointed as a Member and inform the Chair / Clerk accordingly.</p>			
008.2	<p><i>Principal interviews</i></p> <p>The CEO reported verbally that Principal interviews would take place on 3rd & 6th May 2022. Trustees were asked to express their interests to the CEO if they wish to sit on the interview panel.</p>			
008.3	<p>Clarification and challenge</p> <p>1. Following a query on the academies requiring a new Principal, it was reported that Principal interviews were taking place to recruit for Star and Bristnall Hall.</p>			
008.4	Action			
	Action	Description of task	Who	When
	A15	To consider becoming a Member and advise Chair / Clerk of interest	All	ASAP

009	Confidential items
009.1	The Chair requested that Trustees remain in the meeting for an informal confidential item (unclerked); all non-Trustees left the meeting at this point.
	<i>The meeting ended at 14.17pm and Trustees went into confidential session at that point.</i>

Date of next meeting: 18th May 2022 10.30am to 14.00pm @ The Harvest Fields (lunch provided)

M Beardmore

Signed by Chair

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Date.....18th May 2022.....

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A01	Pay Policy 2022/23 to be shared with Trustees (when drafted) and be an item on the next agenda	Clerk / CEO	Next meeting
A02	To include reference to the MAT Central Team salaries / performance management procedures in the Pay Policy 2022/23	CEO	Next meeting
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A04	To review the pay of primary and secondary academy staff against national averages	CEO	Next meeting
A05	To add an Equality Impact assessment to the Pay Policy 2022/23	CEO	Next meeting
A06	Proposals on changes to LGB from 1.9.22 to be brought to the next meeting	TC / Clerk	Next meeting
A07	To send a summary of the White & Green papers to Trustees for information	NED	After this meeting
A08	To expand on acronyms in future reports	NED	Ongoing
A09	MG to act on behalf of the Board to review / approve the recommendation relating to MIS and report back at the next meeting	MG / PW	After this meeting
A10	'Risk Register' to be a standing agenda item on all committees	Clerk	Next Cttee meetings
A11	To send any comments on the Risk Register & Internal Scrutiny programme to the ARC Chair	All	By 15.6.22
A12	To share the Risk Management policy / strategy with Trustees for information	PW	End of term
A13	To share future BoT minutes with Members for information	Clerk	Ongoing
A14	Modern Slavery Statement to be an item on the next agenda	Clerk	Next BoT

A15	To consider becoming a Member and advise Chair / Clerk of interest	All	ASAP
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