

**Directors (ie trustees) meeting
Meeting held on 19th Sep 2024 at 4.30 pm,
at Brixington Primary Academy,
Draft Minutes**

Present: A Walmsley (chair), P Walker (CEO, left early as expected), C Bromfield, A Denner, P Wimsett and M Williams (joined late as expected)

In attendance I Candy (C Sec), A Gavin (DoPO), M Platten (DoF), C Fegan (DSI) and K Powell (DSI, joined late)

Quorum: the meeting was quorate throughout, despite one trustee leaving early and one trustee joining late, and trustees having to leave the meeting while being elected as chair / vice-chair respectively.

Circulation: Directors and members (through GovernorHub), Dioceses (EDEN and SDBE via GovernorHub), schools & public (through Federation website)

Decision	Action due
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1. Welcome and apologies		
R Shaw sent apologies as she was unwell. (Whilst she was initially hoping to attend the meeting, she was unable to do so.) P Wimsett had indicated he would join the meeting virtually and may be late due to family commitments but attended the meeting on time. M Williams had indicated he would join the meeting virtually and late.		
2. Prayer		
Led by P Wimsett.		
3. Declaration of Conflict of Interests		
Declarations of conflict of interests were invited by the chair. None was made. I Candy was asked to ensure that all directors had been sent a business interests and related party form to complete as some believed it had not been circulated.		I Candy
4. Minutes of the last meetings		
4.1. To approve the minutes of the last meeting (held on 18 July 2024)		
P Walker joined the meeting at this point. The draft minutes of the previous meetings, Part I and Part II, were circulated ahead of the meeting. These were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the chair.		
4.2. To review matters arising not otherwise on the agenda		
The list of matters arising and the consultation for extending the age range at Brixington to include two year olds were circulated ahead of the meeting. The following matters arising were raised and discussed:		Appendices 1 – 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management partnership with Exeter Road school: the partnership is working in practice but the agreement remains to be signed and a JMPC meeting needs to be arranged. Appointment of trustee who is a senior educational MAT leader: A Walmsley reported that he had discussed with R Warwick, acting CEO at Aspire, taking on a trustee role for the FFT as a result of the condition by DfE linked to growth. 		I Candy

<p>This condition meant the vacancy that had been held for Acorn / Chickerell had to be filled in that way instead. Aspire is a trust of 37 primary schools in Cornwall. There have been some interactions between the two trusts before, around sharing good practice and looking at school improvement. Aspire includes similar types of schools and has a similar structure with hubs and some local committees. There are two vacancies on the board following A Gosling resignation due to increasing work pressures which means she no longer had the time to dedicate to meetings. A Walmsley recommended that the board accepts R Warwick application. She will attend at least once in person and the rest of the time remotely. She would also be happy to join the education committee, should the board wish her to.</p>	
<p>The board agreed to accept R Warwick's application to become a FFT trustee. As both vacancies are for foundation trustees (1 EDEN and 1 SDBE), I Candy will follow this up so that the required appointment process is followed. A Walmsley also reported that that SDBE had been approached regarding the vacancy for SDBE foundation trustee, and they are not in the position to recommend a candidate.</p>	I Candy
<p>The board formally thanked A Gosling for her contribution as a governor, trustee, committee chair and hub board member over many years, initially at Sidmouth school, then for Genesis Trust and then for the FFT. A thank you card for her will be signed at the governance conference.</p>	A Walmsley
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Musbury Moles</u>: the current provision is likely to close with the support of Devon Early Years' team and should this happen the Trust will be re-starting the provision. • <u>Actions for the Trust safeguarding lead (T Winn) following her reporting to the last board meeting:</u> the second action is still open and will be followed up. 	I Candy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Actions for the trust board:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Group of trustees to meet to discuss what the trust will do differently with regards to tracking and improving pupil attainment:</u> The CEO performance management committee met but was not quorate as there were only two members of the committee available, A Walmsley and A Denner. They were able to deal with some of the process, but the committee will reconvene with P Wimsett and M Williams in attendance to share what has been discussed. This process included pupil outcomes and how to best support and challenge these aspects around the year. So this action will be followed up by the CEO performance management committee. 	A Walmsley
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Trust approach to SIAMS and lessons learn from SIAMS inspection at Salcombe:</u> P Wimsett and A Walmsley are due to catch up with C Fegan and R Earley to follow up the outcome of the SIAMS inspection at Salcombe and ensure clarity of expectation. 	A Walmsley
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Standards meeting:</u> A Denner has been invited to the standards meeting (as well as R Shaw). ○ <u>Update structures document circulated in July to reflect post TUPE position:</u> P Walker is due to circulate this. 	P Walker
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Strong chair to be appointed for the hub with a majority of joiner schools:</u> A Denner is going to chair the Dorset Hub. There are other hub chair vacancies to be filled. ○ <u>Review Trust approach to complaints to limit the impact on executive link directors and share workload:</u> the policy will be reviewed to ensure there is less impact on the SI executive directors. 	I Candy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Other action points:</u> these will be completed in due course ○ <u>Consultation to extend the age range at Brixington to include two years old:</u> The consultation was noted by the board. The responses will be considered when the consultation closes. Devon EY team has indicated that there is 	

<p>local demand for a provision for two years old, particularly given the extension in childcare entitlement.</p>	
<p>5. To receive the verbal feedback from the committee chairs</p>	
<p>There was no verbal feedback as no committee meeting had taken place since the last directors meeting.</p>	
<p>6. To receive and discuss the updated from the CEO (P Walker), to include adopting the Trust strategic plan for 2024-27</p>	
<p>The CEO report, final draft of the Trust 2024-27 strategic plan and Trust peer review proposal were circulated ahead of the meeting. P Walker highlighted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school summer holiday has been unusually busy due to government announcements and the transfer of Chickerell and the Acorn schools to the Trust. • the DfE announcement regarding staff pay scale increases is now due to go to parliament to be ratified with pay being back dated. His recommendation is for the Trust to continue to follow/match the national recommendation as the trust has done before. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ This has always been the practice of the Trust and was agreed by the board. • The management partnership with Exeter Road is due to continue for another year. The financial position of the school is not being managed by the LA as had been expected, and therefore this would have an impact on how a request from the school to join the FFT would be considered. Given the current financial pressures, the board concurred that the Trust needs to be mindful about taking on schools with a deficit. P Walker and M Platten were asked to look at what positions could be acceptable and recommend which level of deficit if any should be acceptable to the board. The board agreed for the management partnership to be extended for another 12 months. • Chickerell and the former Acorn schools have joined the Trust as expected. This was a long complex process due to a number of factors. The new schools are engaging well and sharing feedback as new systems are being shared. Two staff members from Acorn have not joined as set out in P Walker's report. The board should be mindful that some actions linked to the transfer of the Acorn schools need to be completed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Putting in place a temporary Church lease at Marshwood ◦ The potential for a new school building to be built for Mrs Ethelston's, with funds being raised by the Bestic Trust, which need to be worked together with the LA and Exeter Diocese ◦ The land at Lodgers being sold by the current owner and that is in the process of being purchased by SDBF. ◦ The articles need to be updated to include Bath & Wells diocese as Corporate Member. The proposed articles are currently being reviewed by Exeter Diocese. <p>The board thanked P Walker and his team for getting the transfer done on time. P Walker further highlighted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is unlikely that any new school will join the Trust within the next 12 months. • TCAF is a risk with the FFT having made a £750K bid, No bids have been acknowledged and the DfE are reviewing their spending priorities. A Walmsley commented that a large part of the TCAF funding has been spent in previous rounds by the DfE so grants awarded are likely to be smaller in value if any are awarded at all. This is a risk to the agreed budget, and activities will need to be reviewed if necessary. <p><u>Strategic priorities including pupil outcomes:</u> P Walker highlighted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil attainment was below expected in some schools but also above expected in others. Where attainment was below expected, this was disappointing. 	<p>Appendices 3 – 5</p> <p>M Platten / P Walker</p> <p>A Gavin A Walmsley / P Walker</p> <p>A Gavin</p> <p>I Candy</p>

Data has been checked and has been adjusted for some schools. There are no progress measures because KS1 SAT did not take place 4 years ago during Covid and are due to become optional. The calculation method for MAT performance tables has been announced. This will affect the FFT figures. Mary Dean's will not be included in the measure because they joined after 1 Sep 2023. School figures are multiplied by the number of years they have been in the trust: 1, 2, 3 for the past three year joiners and 4 before that.

- The ambition of the Trust for 2025 is that all outcomes will be 75% of pupils attaining ARE with the exception of phonics where the ambition is that 85% of pupils pass the phonics test. These are collective figures across the Trust rather than individually for each school. This is ambitious given the current national average for those measures. The ELT has discussed targets and plans with schools. These will be reviewed at the first standards meeting where plans will be approved.
- The Trust priorities set out in his report come from the strategic plan and his report also includes a list of activities that are being done differently in order to raise outcomes.
- Attendance is good overall but there are some pockets of entrenched poor attendance which need to be addressed.

The board asked whether schools set targets based on what they know of each cohort and how that compares with the 75% ambition of the Trust for Year 6 outcomes.

Schools will be using standard tests done in Year 5. Pupils that had a score of 89 and above should be able to attain ARE in Year 6. For pupils with a lower score that will be a challenge. Schools have been asked to then look at how this compares with the Trust ambition and to identify individual children, what they do not know yet to meet ARE and what they need to learn. The SI team has made clear that it is important that teachers are aware of these individual children and the plans to get them to ARE, rather than looking simply at figures.

The board queried whether it would be useful to know the gap between the current position and the Trust ambition, given that last year the Trust aimed for 65% and were disappointed and surprised by the actual outcomes.

The targets for each school will be set based on their cohort, some will be higher and some will be lower than the Trust ambition. There is likely to be a range for each target for each school. More information about this will be provided at the education committee.

Ofsted inspection changes:

[M Williams joined the meeting at this point].

P Walker highlighted that:

- Ofsted inspections are due to restart from the week after this meeting/
- Graded inspection will have the judgements for each area will published rather than an overall grade.
- Ungraded inspections will no longer include deep dives.

Sidmouth build:

P Walker reported that:

- Some grounds work has started for the MUGA and the equipment is on site. This has happened in time to prevent planning permission from expiring.
- The Trust has had the approval from the DfE to go to tender for the rest of the project.

Significant procurement:

P Walker reported that procurement for IT support, MIS and schools' connectivity has just started.

Performance management:

P Walker reported that:

- Performance management for all teachers was completed in the summer term.
- Performance management for all executive directors has now been completed.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I Candy's performance management is due to take place the week after this meeting. • These have taken place early to help ensure accountability. <p><u>Trust 2024-27 strategic plan</u> There are a few minor amendments / corrections to be made to the updated version circulated ahead of the meeting. The board agreed the Trust 2024-27 strategic plan subject to these minor changes being made.</p>	
<p>7. To receive and discuss the update from DoF (M Platten) and note the updated the updated budget filed</p>	
<p>The DoF report was circulated ahead of the meeting. M Platten highlighted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • His report summarised the changes from the budget agreed in July which was agreed in updated form later in the summer by written resolution • The increase in teacher pay scale was higher than expected but there was an additional grant to cover this as well as some of the support staff pay scale increases. This meant that the Trust budget position was better overall. <p>The board formally noted and concurred with the approval by written resolution. The board queried how much of the additional grant covers the pay increase across all types of staff. From the information received by the Trust to date, the grant should substantially cover the pay rise and therefore lead to a reduction in the risk of increased costs in this area. M Platten further highlighted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the July 2024 management accounts are available on GovernorHub. • The ones for August will be added in due course • The July management accounts show a £350K in-year deficit, which is less than initially expected. Therefore, the Trust hopes to end the year with an in-year deficit lower than £500K, leaving reserves of over £1.3M. • There are however risks around TCAF and also the cost inflation of services particularly looking at 2024-25. <p>The board noted this update and felt reassured that this was an improved starting position for the trust. [K Powell joined the meeting at this point]</p>	<p>Appendix 6</p>
<p>8. Priorities for the current year: what does the board & Trust SLT want to do differently in order to improve accountability?</p>	
<p>The DfE strong trusts descriptors document was circulated as reference ahead of the meeting. The following points were raised and discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The board was disappointed with the Trust pupil outcomes which were below national average, this led to this matter being on the agenda. • The board wanted to see what could be done differently to raise pupil outcomes and the board confidence in predicted outcomes. • The board also wanted to make sure that all the Trust schools, including the new joiners, understand how accountability works in the FFT as they would previously have had a different structure. • Actions have already been set out in the CEO report around target settings. • One of the priorities in the Trust strategic plan is to raise outcomes. The Trust executive team is developing a one year plan setting out milestones for each Trust strategic priority and responsibilities for each milestones. These one-year plans will be helpful to help hold individuals accountable. <p>The board queried whether more heads of schools would be attending hub board meetings. Heads have been asked to attend the full meeting when it is their school that is the focus, as well as attend another one hub board meeting in which their school is not a focus and see how other heads report and answer to the hub boards. The board probed how the executive would ensure that trustees get a sense of whether schools are on track to meet targets and raise standards or not.</p>	<p>Appendix 7</p>

<p>Hub board meeting minutes should make that clear. Hub chairs will then discuss this as part of the chairs group meetings. That information will then feed into the information shared with the education committee.</p> <p>The executive team will raise exceptions with the education committee, either schools that are not performing as expected, or schools that are doing performing better than expected / practice that is being picked up as being beneficial. This will then be shared with the board as part of the feedback from the education committee.</p> <p>It is important that trustees understand the position and where there are risks in terms of educational performance as this is a significant area of focus.</p> <p>C Fegan will be sharing information at the governance conference around how the accountability system will be improved through a tighter cycle of reports that are more clearly based on the school SIP and the priorities / steps agreed at the start of the year. The updated format of the heads' reports will include an impact statement and also have a sharper analysis for in year assessment.</p> <p>In addition, the trust will hold regular standards meetings. Six schools are due to have an annex to their SIP around the rapid improvement needed. This will enable the executive team to better hold schools to account.</p> <p>Furthermore, in terms of SEND, the Trust will have better tools that trustees can use based on the evaluation done by schools. The Trust will also be linking attendance to attainment to address poor attendance earlier.</p> <p>Regular reviews in place that will help systematically review things.</p> <p>Trustees were pleased to hear that the SIP reporting will be more systemic this year.</p> <p>The board enquired whether the discussions with schools around the 2024 outcomes and the targets for this year would be reported to the hub boards.</p> <p>The analyse of the 2024 data will be shared as the first head report of the year at the first hub board of the year.</p> <p>Additional scrutiny will take place through the standards panel and also through reports from the executive team.</p> <p>The board asked how the Challenge Partners trust review would complement this process.</p> <p>The training for the review will be taking place during this Autumn term. The review will then take place during the Spring term. Taking part in the review will also give the Trust access to events and resources that can be drawn on as well.</p> <p>The board further asked what it would be able to learn from the trust internal peer reviews.</p> <p>Eight heads worked together on a pilot last term and developed some templates around the foci, timetable, preparation and feedback of internal peer reviews. The reports from those will go to A Jenkins and the linked directors of the school. A summary of the reports is likely to be shared by A Jenkins.</p> <p>Peer reviews will be included in school support plans. School support plans are the updated version of the schools' work plans used by the Trust last year.</p> <p>Trustees fed back that it would be useful to have both external information and some internal information about key issues for the board. The process should also help heads to develop.</p>	
<p>9. Governance matters</p>	
<p>9.1. To elect the Chair and Vice-Chair for the remainder of the year</p>	
<p>[P Walker left the meeting at this stage].</p> <p>A Walmsley left the meeting. I Candy chaired the meeting so that the election of chair could take place. A Walmsley was elected as chair for the next 12 months and came back to the meeting. He explained that he had challenged himself about the outcomes and whether there was something that could have been done in order for the board to be more effective. This was then discussed thoroughly with the external advisor who felt that the Trust had aimed to do the right thing but it did not happen in spite of good plans.</p> <p>A Denner left the meeting so that the election of vice-chair could take place. She was elected as vice-chair and came back to the meeting. She explained that she</p>	

<p>had also reflected in the same way about pupil outcomes and the impact of the trust board and education committee.</p>	
<p>9.2. To receive an update on governance appointments and vacancies</p>	
<p>A summary of governance appointments and vacancies was circulated ahead of the meeting, so that trustees were aware of where there are vacancies. Information about the new potential trustee discussed earlier in the meeting was repeated for the benefit of M Williams who had not yet joined the meeting when this was discussed.</p> <p>A Walmsley reported that, following A Gosling's resignation, M Williams had been approached informally to become the chair of the audit & risk committee. The board noted that as a result of A Gosling's resignation, there is SDBE appointed foundation trustee vacancy. Candidates will need to meet Salisbury criteria in order to be able eligible to apply and the successful candidate will be required to attend induction training run by SDBE. This will need to be followed up.</p> <p>There are three hub board chair vacancies. There is a short term and longer term plan to fill those. The Trust needs to reflect and document how hub chairs are recruited/appointed and supported in their role</p> <p>The Trust is liaising with former governors for Acorn schools, in particular parent and foundation governors, to establish whether they wish to continue in a governance capacity and give them "first refusal" for the parent council member and foundation representative vacancies.</p>	<p>Appendix 7</p> <p>Board</p> <p>I Candy</p>
<p>9.3. To adopt the code of conduct</p>	
<p>The proposed code of conduct was circulated ahead of the meeting. This is based on the NGA latest model.</p> <p>The board adopted the proposed code of conduct.</p>	<p>Appendix 8</p>
<p>9.4. To adopt the terms of reference for the Board of Directors committees (Strategic & Finance, Audit & Risk, Education, Admissions, First and Second committees, CEO performance management committee), Chair groups, Governance Hub Boards, and Academy Committees (including Portesham and Chickerell)</p>	
<p>The proposed terms of reference for the above committees and hub boards were circulated ahead of the meeting.</p> <p>The trust board noted that R Shaw would be a member of the education committee this year, to replace A Gosling.</p> <p>The board agreed to invite R Warwick to attend the education committee to decide if she has the capacity to become a member of the committee.</p> <p>A Walmsley highlighted that Chickerell wished to retain a SI committee made of the former trustees to support the transition, and this will be helpful to retain governance knowledge of the school, especially given that the school is due its Ofsted inspection. This is why specific terms of reference were drafted for the academy committee for that school.</p> <p>The academy committee at Portesham will be continued as envisaged last year.</p> <p>The terms of reference for all of the committees and hub boards were adopted by the board as proposed.</p> <p>I Candy checked that the following trustees were willing to continue in the following lead roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding: R Shaw • SEND, PP, and LAC: C Bromfield • Church schools: P Wimsett • Finance: A Walmsley <p>C Bromfield, P Wimsett and A Walmsley confirmed their willingness to continue in that role.</p> <p>I Candy highlighted there is now a vacancy for the role of lead trustee for data protection following A Gosling's resignation.</p> <p>The board discussed whether a lead trustee should be appointed for attendance given the increase expectations from the DfE in this area. The board suggested that this be included in the role of lead safeguarding trustee. A Walmsley to approach R Shaw to check whether she is willing to continue to be the lead trustee for safeguarding and for this role to include an oversight of attendance.</p>	<p>A Walmsley / I Candy</p> <p>A Walmsley</p>

<p>9.5. To adopt the scheme of delegation</p> <p>The proposed scheme of delegation was circulated ahead of the meeting. I Candy explained that this had been updated to reflect the latest model for the NGA to include more areas explicitly, including some additions that were identified as being needed as part of the Church Schools Flourishing programme.</p> <p>The board adopted the scheme of delegation as proposed.</p>	<p>Appendix 9</p>
<p>9.6. To note the requirement to have read KCSiE2024</p> <p>Trustees noted the requirement to have read KCSiE 2024 and confirm this in GovernorHub.</p> <p>I Candy recommended that they particularly focus on Part 2 of the guidance, the managing of safeguarding, as this sets out the responsibility of governing boards.</p>	
<p>10. Policies and compliance to include admissions policies for consultation</p> <p>The policy and compliance report and the proposed policies were circulated ahead of the meeting.</p> <p><u>Pupil attendance policy:</u> K Powell explained that the team had developed a FFT version looking at various examples and models. They have consulted with a range of stakeholders and also have a lot of resources that sit underneath the policy for each LA.</p> <p>The pupil attendance policy was adopted by the board as proposed.</p> <p>L Skinner, the Trust attendance officer, was thanked by the board for her work on this. K Powell to pass the thanks onto L Skinner.</p> <p><u>Record retention policy:</u> I Candy explained that this had developed using the template provide by the DPO and whilst there were some points that still required clarification, it was important for staff to understand how long records needed to be kept for and when they could be disposed of.</p> <p>The record retention policy was adopted by the board in the knowledge that some points need to be clarified.</p> <p><u>Admissions policies for consultation for 2026-27:</u> I Candy outlined the main changes that were suggested by Devon Admissions as set out in the policy and compliance report. These were adopted by the board.</p> <p><u>CANVA DPIA and Maths Circle DPIA:</u> The board noted the reasons that the DPIAs were required and adopted them.</p> <p><u>Matters for awareness:</u> These were noted by the board. Trustees were reminded about the forthcoming governance conference.</p>	<p>Appendix 10</p> <p>K Powell</p>

Meeting start: 4.30 pm; meeting close: 6.26 pm

Date of the next meetings: SFC - 10th Oct, ARC – 10th Oct, EC – 24th Oct, Directors – 19th Dec

These minutes are agreed by those present as being a true record.

Signed:.....
Chair of Directors

Date:.....

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