

MEETING	BOARD OF DIRECTORS
DATE	Tuesday 09 February 2016
VENUE	Ninestiles School
ATTENDEES	Ateef Azam, Abid Butt, Ian Carnell, Martyn Collin, Karen Crowston, Adrian Davies, Dominic Davis, Vrigu Dey, Gaetano Ferrante, Sian Hartle, Karamat Iqbal, Cath Lavelle, Nadeen Proverbs, Carol Phillips, Chris Quinn, Terry Smith, Penny Wagg, David Werry
IN ATTENDANCE	Hilary Barber, Steven Ralph

MINUTES

1. Welcome and apologies

Apologies were received from Bob Fear.

2. Register of Business Interests

Directors were reminded to inform the clerk of any changes to their registered details.

3. Declaration of Pecuniary Interests

None were declared.

4. Recently elected Academy Councillors

Erdington Hall:	Judith Tulloch
	Ruby Hussain
Oaklands:	Tim Richards
	Catherine Ball
Yarnfield:	Akram Din
Pegasus:	Shona Leach
	Lee Croft

Representatives of the directors will be meeting with Heather Day after half term with a view to an appointment at Yarnfield and there remains one parent vacancy at Ninestiles.

5. Chair's Actions

No actions were reported.

6. School Performance Update

Three relevant documents were circulated prior to the meeting. Martyn presented the primary and secondary information (previously reported to each academy council) and noted that the information includes the key performance targets set and agreed by Kevin Massey (external assessor) in conjunction with the Principals. The format facilitates a comparison across each school within its phase. Chris Q confirmed that all information either has been, or will be, discussed in detail by academy councillors. Directors can be confident that targets set are rigorous and stretching despite the uncertainty of national reporting protocols for primary. Chris Q noted the significant challenges for

all schools during the coming months. Martyn noted that the KS2 attainment maths figure was missing and commented that he would update the document and circulate to directors. **Vrigu noted how useful the presentation of the information is and thanked those who have compiled it.** Martyn thanked Chris Stevens for his advice in relation to this. **David asked if any “judgements” had been made to date** and Martyn explained that a review is being set up internally in the manner of an external inspection with training being made available to the Principals and other school leaders to carry out reviews across each of the trust schools. Chris Q is meeting with the secondary Principals and will discuss a similar process across the secondary schools. **Karamat noted the importance of knowing that the data has been scrutinised and analysed by the academy councillors and noted particular areas of interest, eg disadvantaged pupils, EAL. He commented that he is currently in discussion with the DfE around this issue and they have suggested that there is evidence that pupils need support only in their first three years of education and asked what the current situation is in schools across the trust.** Chris Q explained that EAL provision is being developed, based at Cockshut Hill and led by Carol Phillips, who is experienced in EAL programmes that can work across the trust. Carol explained that the work at Cockshut is around basic survival language initially but works towards supporting students into mainstream and providing literacy skills which enable students to access the broader curriculum. In primary schools there is training available to staff to support learners. **Karamat expressed his agreement that not only basic language was important but also the needs of advanced learners with EAL.** Sian expressed concern about the current Y11 cohort at Cockshut Hill in terms of exam literacy. **Vrigu asked about the benchmarking information** and Martyn explained that the 55 schools involved are selected on the basis of prior attainment. He cautioned that the geographical context can be very variable.

7. CEO Report

Chris Q presented her report and highlighted the need to discuss how funding could be managed more centrally. Chris emphasised the need for Principals to feel able to make a frank and open contribution to the discussion. Chris raised the possibility of looking at different models of funding that could create a greater efficiency and equity across the trust. Chris noted that there are seven highly capable Principals and noted that there is a need to ensure that these excellent leaders are not disincentivised about how they wish to facilitate their school improvement. However there is a need for a sustainable budget which allows for development.

- Ateef commented that there is a need to think of ourselves as one organisation (with seven sites) which is able to enact economies of scale and he supports this wholeheartedly.
- Terry suggested that whilst she is supportive in theory, there is a need to be aware of providing a level of administration that eats into the usable funding. Karen responded that the working group had agreed that this must not be the case, in fact the central administration could save resources with an ability to deploy resources more effectively.
- Karamat suggested that in the past the LA held back central funding and suggested that there is a need to be transparent about administration costs and ensure the expected savings are real and transparent. He suggested setting a base line of current expenditure that could be compared to the situation in for instance, six months time. Terry said she felt reassured that the working group had recognised the danger of excessive centralised costs and was positive about the possibility of a ground breaking scheme.
- David said it would be relatively easy to conduct benchmarking as suggested but noted the amount of work this would involve. Chris Q suggested that it may be conducted in phases. Steve commented that the first priority would be to assess model staffing structures against what the current situation is. Karamat suggested that a model should detail teaching and non-teaching costs. Steve noted that last year, very broadly, 50% of the staffing budget covered teachers, 25% teaching assistants and the remaining 25% was non-teaching staff.
- Chris Q commented that the absolute key driver should be the improved provision for students and pupils. Chris Q said it was also important to recognise the individuality of each school and its

particular community. She commented that there is a significant reduction in funding anticipated and this drives the need for effective management of resources. The government's reduction of training places for teachers could be an evidence of this. There is a need to plan ahead recognising this.

- Ian suggested it was an eminently sensible way forward as long as it is managed effectively. He commented that there must be other trusts working in this way and suggested the possibility of visiting them. Chris Q agreed that there is learning to be done in terms of procurement.
- Karen noted the value of procuring from the centre for the benefit of the whole trust. She said that complete transparency is crucial and directors are the group who will make and monitor the decisions.
- Chris S said he was in agreement with the principle of fair funding across the trust. He said the synchronisation of the school day and curriculum was an important driver and there could be great efficiencies in terms of middle and senior leadership. The discussion around staffing, however difficult, needs to take place. He commented that he felt it was the right thing to do morally.
- Karen talked about providing a consistency of expectation in terms of staff resources across the trust.
- Martyn said the proposal was about the quality of what the trust is able to secure rather than just saving money. He commented on the likely drastic impact that budget cuts would have on a one-form entry primary school and how the trust can secure the provision by working together as a whole. Collectively the trust is responsible for every child in every school. The trust is currently providing additional support, facilitated by the centre but based in schools.

Chris Q reported on the work undertaken by the trust training leadership weekend on 06/07 February. Discussions led to agreement and a recommendation to directors of a synchronised school day for the secondary schools who are also working together on a common assessment framework and are about to embark on a common KS3 curriculum.

Chris Q said that this sends out the message that the trust is practitioner led and staff have a real voice in this innovative process. Chris Q has suggested to Steve Munby, CEO of the Education Development Trust, that she and Martyn and the Principals present to their conference later in the year. **Cath commented that central provision and the way primaries work together has supported the improved outcomes. Joint CPD and professional conversations are also very effective.** The model evidences the trust's commitment to its staff and well as pupils and students, and helps to retain good staff. At primary level the assessment and subject groups are well developed and offer support across the schools. **Carol agreed that the trust model helps to retain staff and offers opportunities for promotion across the trust.**

Chris Q presented the proposed consistent school day for the secondaries. It was noted that there was a re-distribution, but no reduction, of teaching time. The day contains four 75 minute lessons and the synchronisation will allow for teaching across the schools and the ability to put together groups of expert staff. Directors were asked for their approval prior to the plan going out to staff consultation. Abid commented that the leadership teams were very positive at their conference last weekend. Gaetano said that Ninestiles would retain Aspire during period 1 in week 2.

Chris Q noted there would be significant work in bringing the changes to fruition and when theory becomes practice there will be challenges, but there is an experience and expertise within the trust in managing change. There will be a need to expend time and emotional energy.

Directors approved the proposed school day.

Proposed: **Vrigu Dey**
Seconded: **Penny Wagg**

Chris Q reported that the area review on Post 16 education in Solihull is now in the public domain. The report is still confidential with an executive report about to be published. Solihull's Sixth Form College's interest in being part of the NAT is reported. Initial discussions have not yet made much progress; however Paul Ashdown will be meeting with the directors' representatives for further clarification about the issues after half term. Chris Q emphasised that whilst exploratory work is taking place at school/college level, the decision will be taken by directors. **Ateef asked how many directors sit on the college's board** and Chris suggested it is about the same number as the trust board.

8. Finance

a. Proposal re Staff Payroll

Chris Q explained that currently the schools still employ the payroll services of the LAs. She explained that the service is not as good as it was previously and with the growth of the trust there could be capacity created centrally to manage payroll.

Directors agreed that investigations should be made into what is available in terms of software and alternative provision.

Proposed: **Vrigu Dey**
Seconded: **David Werry**

9. Feedback from Academy Councils

Pegasus: David asked directors to consider how support can be given to pupils struggling with mental health issues.

Erdington Hall: No feedback.

Ninestiles: Vrigu commented on the good and well informed meeting and the usefulness of the presentation by Assistant Principals regarding the use of the learning work books. Gaetano said the presentation evidenced the positive work on teaching and learning that is taking place.

Yarnfield: Ian reported on his meeting with the School Council when he had spoken with a pupil who had come to the school with no English. The pupil had told him how supportive the other pupils had been to help his language improvement. Ian asked if there could be a whole trust school council event alongside the school to school visits planned. Chris Q informed directors that a joint event would take place towards the end of the summer term. Ian commented on the possibility of also arranging an event for more gifted and able children across the trust.

Lyndon: No feedback.

The Oaklands: Terry reported on discussions that taken place around EAL provision.

Chris Q responded to the feedback by informing directors of the EAL provision being developed within the trust and reporting that at least part of the next trust training day would be focussed on pupil mental health and wellbeing. Cockshut Hill and Ninestiles are currently involved in a programme called Headstart which addresses these issues although it is obvious that it will be a slow process and there is little funding being made available. The DSL group have noted the increase in Child Protection issues provoked by mental health problems.

Gaetano commented on the BBC's highlight on mental health this week and wondered whether there would be resources resulting from this.

10. Consultation with Unions – facilities time

Martyn reported on the TUPE meeting he attended at Cockshut Hill. He explained the nature of union facilities time and noted that it is not an automatic charge for academies. Chris pointed out that the trust recognises the work of school union representatives and that it is essential that our teachers and non teachers receive a good level of support. Adrian suggested that the trust could train a member of

staff with the expertise to support union members across the trust. Sian reminded directors that the trust provides the Work Life Support service for all staff. Chris suggested that any member of staff who feels they are receiving a lesser service because of the non-payment of facilities time should feel free to report this. Directors agreed that they should maintain the current position and not pay into facilities time.

It was agreed that the possibility of training a centrally recognised union support for staff should be explored.

11. Policies

No Platform Policy (for approval)

Social Media Policy (for approval)

Adoption Policy (for approval)

Equalities Policy (for approval)

David commented on the need for the policy to be explicit about how its aims are worked out in the schools. It was noted that the Equalities Policy has an appendix which details an audit that needs to be carried out across the trust to ensure this.

E Safety

Martin informed directors of the amendments that had been made to the policy.

Adrian recognised the danger of increasing numbers of policies and Chris Q suggested that an exercise should be carried out to identify which policies are statutory and which are about practice and protocols.

Ian asked if Prevent training is available for directors and councillors and it was agreed that a “top up” session would be arranged with one of the trust’s qualified trainers.

The policies were all agreed as follows:

Proposed: **Penny Wagg**

Seconded: **Ian Carnell**

12. Positive News

- David Barker attended a meeting with the DfE on 05 February where he was asked to report on the dialogic teaching project and was quizzed by ministers and special advisers.
- Chris Q attended a working group with Sajid Javid at Downing Street re Social Mobility recently.
- A Trust Awards Evening will take place on Monday 03 October 2016 at the Great Hall of Birmingham University. It was suggested that staff awards could also be included.

13. Minutes and Matters Arising from meeting held on December 15th 2015

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record with the addition of Dominic Davies as an attendee.

Proposed: **Ateef Azam**

Seconded: **Nadeen Proverbs**

14. Any other business

Karen reported on a recent visit she had made to another trust whose motto was about “working smarter, stronger and together” and commented that she felt this ethos was echoed in the Ninestiles’ trust.

The date of the next meeting will be 17 May 2016.

ACTIONS RESULTING FROM MEETING			
	What?	By whom?	Completed?
2016/02/09/01	Update KS2 maths attainment	Martyn C	
2016/02/09/02	Investigate alternative payroll provision	Hilary/Steve	
2016/02/09/03	Plan whole trust school council event	Chris Q/Martyn	
2016/02/09/04	Consider whole trust event for gifted pupils	Chris Q/Martyn	
2016/02/09/05	Explore the possibility of training a trust union representative to support staff	Chris Q/Martyn	
2016/02/09/06	Carry out Equalities framework audit	TBA	
2016/02/09/07	Identify statutory policies and those which are practice and protocols	Hilary	
2016/02/09/08	Arrange "top up" Prevent training for directors	Martyn	