



Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Board held at
The Tiffin Girls' School on Tuesday 15 June 2021

MEETING HELD REMOTELY

The meeting opened at 6.35pm. Governors present:

Sarah Beeching	Shelley Frost	Cate Molden
Kate Bevan	Fazl-E Hasnain (Chair)	Carol Perry
Lucy Boiling	Claire Haynes	Alison Shakespeare
Alexandra Buckle	Ian Keary (Head)	Hamish Stewart
	Ikra Khan	Matt Toolan

Rosemary Jubraj (Clerk)

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming Cate Molden to her first Governing Board since her appointment as a governor by the Members of the Academy Trust.

1. Declarations of any new business or pecuniary interests

The Chair declared an interest regarding agenda item 9.2, appointment of external auditors from accounting year beginning 2021, as he has provided references for Moore (South) when they have bid for contracts with multi-academy trusts. The Chair will therefore not participate in the discussion or decision-making for this agenda item.

2. Apologies for Absence – None, the Clerk confirmed the meeting was quorate.

3. Non-governor Participants and Observers – Emma Kilburn, Deputy Head and Naia Edwards, Development Manager.

Agenda item taken out of order

13. Fundraising Group Report

13.1 Fundraising Group Minutes AND

13.2 Development and Fundraising Strategy AND

13.3 Sports Hall Fundraising Strategy

Naia Edwards, Development Manager, presented the Development and Fundraising Strategy, and the Sports Hall Fundraising Strategy to governors (annexes 10 and 11). Key points from these strategies are summarised in the Fundraising Group minutes (annex 9).

Governors asked whether there is sufficient capacity to deliver the ambitious programme of development and fundraising activities. The Development Manager advised that she currently is supported by a member of support staff who has a marketing background for one day a week. With this support continuing, the Development Manager expressed confidence in being able to deliver the programme.

Sarah Beeching (Fundraising Group Lead) noted this is a comprehensive strategy covering the key elements of developing parental engagement, alumnae and PSA, as well as exploring other avenues of support.

Decision: Sarah Beeching proposed that the Governing Board approve the Development and Fundraising Strategy. This was seconded by Carol Perry and governors voted unanimously in favour.

Governors thanked the Development Manager for her inspirational presentation.

The Development Manager left the meeting.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 11 May 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 May 2021 were considered by governors. Alison Shakespeare proposed, Kate Bevan seconded and those governors who had been present at the May meeting agreed the minutes as a true record.

5. Matters Arising

The Chair informed governors that:

- Regarding paragraph 10.A – the energy contract was signed after clarifications (to the FCC Chair) that there is no penalty clause for gas usage and the penalty clause for electricity will apply only if the consumption is 40% below the historic baseline.
- Regarding paragraph 13.3 – the letting agent has confirmed that there is no statutory requirement to have an inspection for asbestos, but the school will arrange for one in the event of construction works.
- Regarding paragraph 17 – the reference to OJEU has been removed from the Scheme of Delegation.
- Regarding paragraphs 17-20 – all policies have been uploaded to the governor portal, circulated to all staff and the relevant documents are on the school website.

6. Chair's Report

The Chair advised governors that:

- The Confederation of School Trusts has recently published a checklist for 'Assurance Framework for Trust Governance'. The checklist covers 16 elements under Strategic Leadership, Accountability, People & Structure, Compliance and Evaluation. For each of the 16 elements, there are guiding questions, as well as descriptions of strong capacity (Green) and weak capacity (Red) for each question. There is also the option of replying Amber Green or Amber Red but there are no descriptions for these.

Completion of the checklist will help the Governing Board in preparing for an Ofsted inspection and any areas identified as Red or Amber Red can be addressed. The Clerk will circulate the checklist this week and a summary of responses will be included in the July GB meeting together with any action plan as required.

- The Key for School Governors is publishing refresher mini-series articles on Ofsted inspection every week. So far, three articles (Questions Ofsted might ask governors, how Ofsted inspects Quality of education and how Ofsted inspects Behaviour and Attitudes) have been published. Links to these and future articles will be uploaded to the Ofsted folder on the portal.
- The keynote speaker at the NGA webinar for Single Academy Trust (SAT) leaders last week was Dominic Herrington, the National Schools Commissioner. Further to the Secretary of State for Education's recent statement, Mr Herrington reported that there are no current plans to legislate for all SATs to either form or join a Multi-Academy Trust.
- The new Academies Financial Handbook will be published by the end of June and the name will be changed to 'The Academy Trust Handbook (also known as the Academies Financial Handbook).'
- All governors have confirmed that they agree with the proposed arrangements for governance related meetings and visits during the academic year 2021-22. The dates schedule will be included in the July GB meeting. Please note that meetings will be either completely remote or completely in-person, rather than being a hybrid of both.
- Further to yesterday's announcement by the Prime Minister regarding the delay to lifting the pandemic-related restrictions, the July GB meeting will be held remotely.

7. Head's Report

The Head gave governors an update on key headlines since the last Governing Board meeting. This included information on:

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion newsletter circulated and student survey underway
- Young Enterprise – Apricus have reached the UK final and were runners up in the inaugural European Euronext Blue Challenge Competition for Sustainability. Mercury were awarded 3rd prize in a YE UK sustainability competition
- Staffing: internal interviews arranged for Assistant Head, Assistant Head of Sixth Form, Head of Year, PSHE and Citizenship Lead. A Young Enterprise Lead is also needed for September.
- Outreach: UCL training provided virtually
- Internal and interim external financial audits conducted recently
- The school received a letter from Ofsted regarding a complaint made by a parent from a student of another school in relation to a disclosure made on the 'Everyone's Invited' website. Although this complaint falls outside the jurisdiction of the school and the HMI the Head spoke to is in agreement with this, a letter has been placed on the school's file.
- Penetration testing: the Operations Director is liaising with a third party provider
- Parent survey underway
- Interviews to appoint a website developer taking place later in June
- 'Love of Learning' Digest completed by students
- Exclusion update: no exclusions in the Spring Term
- Open Evening will be virtual via a website and will include videos by the Head, Head Girls and Y7 students
- Events have included Y9 and 10 immersion days on RSE, Y9 Duke of Edinburgh expedition, training day for the new student leadership team training, online Shakespeare Festival, Y7 virtual Parents' Evening, Y12 Cambridge Chemistry Challenge and Y12 Biology Olympiad

STRATEGIC FOCI FOR THIS GB

8. Ofsted Preparation

The Chair referred governors to Annex 2 previously circulated and highlighted the revised list of governors allocated to the various areas of responsibility likely to be included in an Ofsted inspection.

9. Audit and Risk Group Report

9.1. May meeting minutes

The Chair referred governors to Annex 3 previously circulated and noted that the majority of items discussed at the Audit and Risk Group meeting are included in the agenda for this GB.

9.2. Appointment of external auditors from accounting year beginning 2021

Sarah Beeching (Audit and Risk Group Lead) referred governors to Annex 4 previously circulated and noted this is the final year of the second three-year external audit arrangement with Moore (South). The Audit and Risk Group considered whether to recommend the reappointment of Moore (South) without going through the tender process at their 18 May 2021 meeting.

The Audit and Risk Group requested comparative information from other single academy trusts in order to benchmark the quote from Moore (South), on the understanding that the information published in statutory accounts may not include the teacher pension fund audit. The Finance Director circulated the benchmarking information and the eligible Audit and Risk Group governors emailed the Clerk to confirm their recommendation that Moore (South) should be reappointed.

The Audit and Risk Group Lead added that should a full tender process have been undertaken, it is likely that the school would have interviewed the same companies recently interviewed for the internal audit contract.

Governors noted that external audit is statutory and relates to the annual accounts that must be submitted to the ESFA and Companies House; internal audit relates to compliance testing, the scope of which is set by the Audit and Risk Group, and these checks are also required by the ESFA.

Governors asked whether the pricing reflects the saving Moore (South) can make as a result of their knowledge and understanding of the school's systems. The Audit and Risk Group Lead confirmed this to be the case.

Decision: The Audit and Risk Group Lead proposed that the Governing Board approve the reappointment of Moore (South) as external auditors for a further three-year period from the accounting year beginning 2021 and the Governing Board to recommend the Members of the Academy Trust agree with this reappointment at the January 2022 AGM. This was seconded by Matt Toolan and those governors eligible to vote did so unanimously in favour.

Action: the Clerk to inform Moore (South) of this decision and note for the January 2022 AGM agenda.

9.3. Internal audit report

The Chair referred governors to Annex 5 previously circulated and noted the Audit and Risk Group reviewed this document at their meeting. This report relates to the February 2021 visit; the first undertaken by Baxter & Co since their appointment as internal auditor from January 2021. The visit was undertaken remotely as the school was closed at the time due to the pandemic and no recommendations have been made.

The Audit and Risk Group Lead reported that the first payroll cycle processed by the new provider ran smoothly.

9.4. Risk register

The Chair referred governors to Annex 6 previously circulated and noted the risk register has been significantly revised by the Head; changes are not tracked. The Audit and Risk Group reviewed this document at their May meeting and recommend it for approval by the GB.

Decision: Sarah Beeching proposed that the Governing Board approve the Risk Register. This was seconded by Matt Toolan and governors voted unanimously in favour.

Action: the Clerk to upload the final document to the governor portal.

10. Finance Report – M8 Accounts

Hamish Stewart (Finance and Contracts Committee Chair from 12 May 2021), referred governors to Annex 7 previously circulated that includes a commentary on the month 8 (April 2021) management accounts, the income and expenditure statement and balance sheet. The Committee Chair noted the school remains in surplus and a reforecast to year end is due to be discussed at the FCC meeting next week. It is anticipated this will show an improved position from the previous reforecast of February as the Finance Director had assumed a prudent position regarding catering and lettings income as well as the costs relating to additional cover for teachers.

The Head added that the school has received a further £20k from the government for mass testing relating to the pandemic.

Governors asked why the credit balance of £4k on the catering account remains under investigation. The Chair advised that, as this sum is a credit amount, the Finance Director and Head are being prudent before including it as an income in the profit and loss account.

11. CIF Bid Update

The Head informed governors that the school has not yet received any news regarding the outcome of the CIF bid for replacement boilers.

12. Sports Hall Update

The Chair referred to Annex 8 previously circulated and noted that governors are invited to ratify the decisions taken unanimously via email on 7 June to support the proposals that:

- (i) the Sports Hall project at a cost of £3,357,752 should proceed; and
- (ii) the Letter of Intent for £3,019,422 with Claremont Refurbishment Limited should be signed by the Head.

The Chair invited governors to indicate if they no longer agreed to the above. All remained in agreement and therefore formally ratified these decisions.

The Chair informed governors that the Head signed the Letter of Intent on 7 June. The Head thanked governors for their support with confirming their agreement with the Letter of Intent and reported that the school has received final approval for the project from the DfE. The Finance Director is liaising with the DfE so that the payment tranches can be more closely aligned with the anticipated schedule of costs.

Governors asked for an update on the negotiation of the main contract. The Head advised that the school is currently in liaison with the contractor regarding the financial schedule and site set up.

14. Student Welfare

SDP: Character – Students are positive about school and feel safe

14.1. Attendance Report

The Chair referred to Annex 12 previously circulated and governors asked about the numbers of Y13 students with attendance of 90% and below. The Head set out the reasons for lower attendance rates in this year group and these are included in the safeguarding report in agenda item 14.4 below.

14.2. Charity Report

The Chair referred governors to Annex 13 previously circulated and highlighted the overall sum raised for a diverse range of local, national and international causes for the academic year to date is £9,736. With some matched funding from the government, this increases to almost £14,000. Governors congratulated the students on the impressive sum raised, particularly taking in to consideration the impact of the pandemic on fundraising activities. The Deputy Head commented on the resilience of the students in being creative in their fundraising bearing in mind all the restrictions that have been in place this year.

14.3. Sixth Form Bursary Report

The Chair referred governors to Annex 13 previously circulated and noted the allocation of the bursary fund for 2020-21.

14.4. Safeguarding Report

The Head gave governors the following update on safeguarding matters:

- Attendance is strong
 - Reasons for lower attendance rates in some students include mental health, illness, COVID related, unable to return from overseas, eating disorders, hospitalisation
 - No concerns raised by the Education Welfare Officer with respect to the school's handling of students with low attendance rates
- Student advocacy group formed regarding sexual harassment, will be shaped in part by the Ofsted report published 10 June 2021 entitled 'Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges'
- Quiet room usage has increased; many incidents are linked to the end of year assessments taking place this term
- Behaviour report shared with middle leaders, with the highest level of behaviour points relating specifically to either a lack of equipment or a lack of homework
- External safeguarding review is due to take place this half term

POLICIES

15. Risk Management Strategy

The Chair referred to annex 15 previously circulated and noted the proposed revisions are highlighted in the text. The Audit and Risk Group reviewed this document at their May meeting and recommend it for approval by the Governing Board.

Decision: the Chair proposed that the Governing Board approve the revised Risk Management Strategy. This was seconded by Shelley Frost and governors voted unanimously in favour.

16. Whistleblowing

The Chair referred governors to annex 16 previously circulated and noted the proposed revisions to this statutory document are highlighted in the text. The Audit and Risk Group reviewed this document at their May meeting and recommend it for approval by the Governing Board.

Decision: Matt Toolan proposed that the Governing Board approve the revised Whistleblowing Policy. This was seconded by Hamish Stewart and governors voted unanimously in favour.

17. Sixth Form Bursary

The Chair referred governors to annex 11 previously circulated and noted the proposed revisions are highlighted in the text and comply with ESFA guidance. These have been drafted by the Clerk and reviewed by the Director of Sixth Form, Head and Chair.

Decision: the Chair proposed that the Governing Board approve the revised Sixth Form Bursary Policy. This was seconded by Kate Bevan and governors voted unanimously in favour.

18. Privacy Notice – Job Applicants

The Chair referred governors to annex 18 previously circulated and Claire Haynes, Data Protection Governor, highlighted that the legal basis the school will rely on for processing the personal data of job applicants is contractual because the information held is in contemplation of entering into an employment contract.

Decision: Claire Haynes proposed that the Governing Board approve the revised Privacy Notice – Job Applicants. This was seconded by Alison Shakespeare and governors voted unanimously in favour

19. Health and Safety

The Chair referred governors to annex 19 previously circulated and noted the proposed revisions are highlighted in the text.

Decision: Shelley Frost proposed that the Governing Board approve the revised Health and Safety Policy. This was seconded by Cate Molden and governors voted unanimously in favour.

Action: the Clerk to circulate the final documents in paragraphs 15-19 to all staff, upload to the governor portal and arrange for website publication where relevant.

20. Support Staff Appraisal

The Clerk informed governors that the HR Director has revised the Support Staff Appraisal Policy and no revisions are required.

21. Items for Urgent Discussion - none

22. Dates of next meetings and visit

The Chair drew attention to the dates of the meetings for the remainder of the summer term as set out on the agenda.

The Chair closed the meeting by noting that this is Alexandra Buckle's final Governing Board before the conclusion of her term of office. The Chair and governors thanked Alexandra for her contributions to the GB over the last four years.

The meeting ended at 7.55pm