



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS (BD) and BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE RURAL CHURCH SCHOOLS ACADEMY TRUST (RCSAT) HELD ON 16th MARCH at THE AQUEDUCT MARINA, CHURCH MINSHULL (Commenced 6pm)

Directors in Attendance:

P Bostock (PB) Chair of Board of Directors
S Loughlin (SL)
I Rutter (IR)

Local Advisory Committee Members in Attendance:

B Brockbank (BB)
I Burnley

L Munro (LM)
S Waddington (SW)

Also in Attendance:

N Badger (NB) Bunbury Aldersey School Principal, Acting Executive Headteacher
A Goodwin (AG) St Oswald's Worleston School Principal
K Appleby (KA) Warmingham School Principal
L Taylor (Clerk to Governors)
H Cummings (Meeting Clerk)

PART ONE

Welcome and Prayer

1. APOLOGIES AND ANY OTHER BUSINESS (AOB) ITEMS

a) Apologies were received and accepted from Directors F Todd (FT), A Platt (AP), A James (AJ), A Denton (AD) and H Spencer (HS). Apologies were received and accepted from Local Advisory Committee members A Tomlinson (AT) and P Goggin (PG).

b) Two items of additional business were tabled for consideration at the end of the meeting:

- St Oswald's OfSTED report complaint.
- Coronavirus and Business Continuity Plan.

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2. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

a) Governors were given opportunity to declare any potential pecuniary interest or conflict of interest between an individual and the board of governors as a whole in connection with the business to be discussed during the meeting. The following were declared:

- P Bostock is Trustee of the Heage Windmill Society
- S Loughlin is a Governor of Christ the King School Macclesfield
- I Burnley is a Trustee of the Worleston School House Trust
- L Monro is a Member of the Bunbury Parochial Church Council
- B Brockbank is a Trustee of the Worleston Church House Trust

3. MEMBERSHIP

Governors noted that Michelle Bromhead was no longer a Local Governor.

4. PART ONE MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

a) The part one minutes of the autumn term Board of Directors and Local Governors meeting held on 18.11.19 were **agreed** as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

b) All actions listed on the action log had been completed, with the exception of the updating of training logs on GH. **Action c/f**

5. PART ONE REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES AND REPORTS FROM GOVERNORS WITH SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

a) Part one minutes of Committee meetings not previously received;

Finance Committee 9.3.20: IR reported that the draft budgets for St Oswald's and Warmingham were looking slightly better, thanks to the new funding formula. KA also noted that Warmingham was expecting a refund of approximately £15k, which had been overpaid to the Diocese some 5 or 6 years previously, for a boiler project. A payment of approximately £4k was also expected from the Warmingham PTA, to cover the cost of books already purchased.

b) There were no other reports from committees.

c) There were no recommendations requiring the approval of the board of governors.

d) Reports from governors with special responsibilities:

GDPR

BB had met with Jo Jones, and all GDPR policies and procedures were now available on GovernorHub. Governors were asked to read all documentation and complete the two training units included.

ACTION: All governors to complete GDPR training units by summer term Joint Directors and Local Advisory Members meeting on 13th July. GH training logs to be updated accordingly.

Q. Does this just apply to governors, or do staff also need to complete the training?

A. Staff need to be trained on GDPR, but these units are specific to governors.

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6. PART ONE EXECUTIVE HEADTEACHER'S (EHT) REPORT AND MATTERS ARISING

The EHT's report had been available on GH prior to the meeting, and NB highlighted the following current challenges:

OfSTED – all three schools had been inspected during the spring term and the inspections of Bunbury and Warmingham were felt to have gone well, despite Warmingham's judgement of RI (Requires Improvement). There were concerns around the inspection of St Oswald's (see AOB below).

Q. Did you feel the Warmingham report was a fair reflection of the school?

A. We were very pleased with the comments recognising the work that had been done and the capacity to improve in future. Overall it was a very positive experience.

Q. Did any of the reports highlight anything you weren't aware of?

A. We did not recognise St Oswald's from the report, but there were no surprises in either if the other two reports.

Finance – the new funding formula has not made a significant difference and concerns remain, particularly around SEND funding. The schools are seeing an increase in the number of children with EHCPs.

Admission numbers – the number of first choice applications for each school is below PAN. The schools would normally hold Open days, but the current situation with Coronavirus has made that impossible.

Overcrowding – both St Oswald's and Warmingham were operating with numbers on role significantly over their official capacity; 132% at Warmingham and 125% at St Oswalds. A meeting had been held with E3Cube to discuss possible solutions and work would begin to prepare bids for funding to extend both schools. Governors noted that E3Cube had recommended bids for both Section 106 funds (money held by the LA from local housing developments) and the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) held by the DfE. It was acknowledged that whilst it would be relatively straightforward to extend St Oswald's, it would be more difficult at Warmingham.

Q. What is the effect of the overcrowding? Are you seeing an impact on learning?

A. Not at the moment, but it means the schools can't take any more children.

Q. Are we happy to proceed with E3Cube.

A. At the moment, we are, as there is a current bid in for Bunbury. Should that fail, we will consider all options. There have been previous issues with sub-contractors and overall project management.

NB shared the OfSTED themes document, drawn up by SLT, and reviewed at the Achievement meeting, identifying the common themes to emerge from the OfSTED inspections. Whilst some are already being addressed, these areas will be included in the School Development Plans to be drawn up for each school during the summer term.

NB also presented the new Curriculum Intent statement. This had been shared with staff at Bunbury and would go to the other schools in the next few days, before being put onto the Trust website.

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Q. Did it go down well with the staff at Bunbury?

A. Yes, it was received very positively.

7. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PARTNER/EXTERNAL ADVISER

The SIP, B Padgett, had not visited in the spring term due to the 3 OfSTED inspections. A visit was scheduled for the summer term.

8. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

LT confirmed that all items had been addressed at the Pastoral and Achievement committee meetings.

9. GOVERNOR MONITORING, TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

a) Report from the Training Liaison Governor:

SL reminded governors that they now have access to online training through the NGA website, and particularly recommended the module on Effective MAT Governance.

Safeguarding training for governors was scheduled for 28th September at 6pm.

b) Governor Monitoring Visit Reports

Reports had been received from PB and HS, and were kept in the appropriate school. Governors were reminded to complete a report form after a visit and return it the school Principal, and also to update their GH training log.

Q. Should meetings with OfSTED be logged as training.

A. Yes, they are part of your involvement with the school.

10. SCHOOL POLICIES

The following policies were **approved by the Board of Directors**.

1. **Draft** Relationships and Health Education.
2. Allegations against staff
3. Complaints
4. Sickness Management

11. PLANNED RESIDENTIAL VISITS

Bunbury: 22 June – 24 June 2020 Y5 and Y3 Shrewsbury; 24 June -26 June 2020 Y6 Conway; 3-5 July 2020 Y6 Tattenhall.

St Oswald's – 1-3 April KS2

The above trips had all been approved by the Board of Directors, but were now in doubt due to the Coronavirus. Governors heard that the schools had not cancelled the trips, as to do so would forfeit any insurance payment. If the venues in question cancelled, then an insurance claim could be made to refund parents.

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12. MEETINGS

The next Full Board of Directors and Local Governor meetings were confirmed as:
 Monday 16 March 2020, 1800-2030, Aqueduct Marina Church Minshull
 Monday 13 July 2020, 1800-2030 Aqueduct Marina Church Minshull

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**OfSTED Complaint – St Oswald’s**

Governors heard that an official complaint had been lodged with OfSTED concerning the inspection of St Oswald’s. The complaint covered the following 3 areas:

- **Process** – should have been a section 5 inspection rather than section 8, as this was the first inspection since St Oswald’s become an academy.
- **Conduct of the Lead Inspector** – Aggressive and confrontational, and refused to consider evidence presented.
- **Judgements**

The full letter of complaint, drawn up with the help of B Padgett, the SIP, was circulated to governors.

ACTION: Letter of complaint to be uploaded to GovernorHub.

Q. What happens now?

A. Both inspectors must respond to the issues raised in the complaint, but they must do so independently, without speaking to each other.

Q. Do the inspectors decide whether it is a section 8 or section 5 inspection?

A. We don’t know. We suspect it was a section 8 inspection because there were no red flags from the data, but that ignored the fact that it is a new school.

Q. What outcome are we hoping for? Do we want the school to be re-inspected?

A. If they concede that the wrong inspection was conducted, then it would be invalid and a new section 5 inspection would be carried out.

Governors discussed parents’ reactions to the report. Comments had been entirely positive; a number noting that they did not recognise the school from the report.

Coronavirus

Governors heard that the Business Continuity Plan shared on GH had already been superseded. There was a constant flow of information and guidance, and advice was constantly being updated. Governors agreed that in such a fast-moving situation, the Chair should work closely with the Senior Leadership Team, without the need to refer back to governors.

A large number of pupils were currently absent, due to a cough, a fever or because families were self-isolating. The Travelling Community with children at St Oswald’s had left the area. The SLT had met to plan for school closures and ensure that activities were available for pupils online. They had made sure that all children had access to the websites and had passwords.

SLT would discuss the situation each morning and update PB as appropriate.

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Issues had also arisen around staff needing to make arrangements for their own children where grandparents had previously helped. Governors agreed that there would need to be some flexibility for staff, but emphasised that childcare should be the responsibility of both parents.

Governors noted that the current staff absence policy states that staff are only paid for half a day in the event that they are absent to look after a sick child. However, this assumes that alternative arrangements can be made after that half a day. In the current situation, this was unrealistic, so staff would be informed that they would continue to be paid if they needed to take more time off. Governors were happy that staff would not take advantage of the change and approved the policy change.

Governors were updated on the list of school events cancelled to date, and the Chair asked that governors be informed of any future cancellations.

The meeting closed at 7.20pm

Chair.....Date.....