

The Heath Family (NW) Multi Academy Trust
PART I - Minutes from the MAT Board meeting held on
Thursday 26th May 2022 at 8.00 am

***** This meeting was held remotely using Microsoft Teams *****

<u>Present:</u> Helen Stevenson (Chair), Edward Vitalis, Karl Smith, Christopher Davis, Tony Gundersen, Annette Williams		<u>Apologies:</u> Alison Duckworth, Janine Inglis, Mark Stanton			
<u>In Attendance:</u> David Donnelly, Sharon Black, Craig Parkinson, Judith McConville		Non attenders: None			
		Clerk: Trish Roberts			
Items	Discussion	Action	Who	When	Notes
1. Welcome, introductions & apologies	Ms Stevenson welcomed everyone to the meeting. Trustees then noted and accepted apologies from the following Trustees: Ms A Duckworth, Ms J Inglis, Mr M Stanton Ms Stevenson also noted that she had received notification that Mr K Smith would be arriving to the meeting at approx. 8.30 am.				
2. Declaration of Business and Pecuniary Interests	Trustees received a copy of the Trust's Register of Business Interests 2021-22 prior to the meeting. No further changes have been received since; Trustees also reviewed the Register against the agenda and no declarations were received in respect of this meeting.				
3. To receive/ ratify PART I and PART II Minutes from THF Board meeting held on 28.04.22	Trustees received an electronic copy of PART I and PART II minutes from the MAT Board meeting held on 28.04.22. There were no amendments to be made and therefore the minutes were accepted as a true record and ratified. RESOLVE: That PART I and PART II minutes of the MAT Board meeting held on 28.04.22 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.	Chair of the Board to sign agreed MAT Board Minutes from 28.04.22	H Stevenson	ASAP	
4. To review Matters Arising not included on the Agenda (to include Action Tracker)	Trustees received an electronic copy of the Action Log dated 26.05.22 prior to the meeting. Matters Arising from Minutes of 28.04.22 <i>Executive Principal Arrangements:</i> Mr Donnelly provided a brief update in terms of recruitment processes that have taken place/are underway noting that 2 Deputy Head				

	<p>of Schools posts have been filled, and the other two posts were unsuccessful and as such the recruitment process will be deferred for these posts until Sep 2022. Mr Donnelly also advised that interim arrangements have been put in place for those schools affected.</p> <p>Trustees then reviewed progress on the Action Log dated 26.05.22.</p> <p><i>Pupil Numbers:</i> Mr Donnelly advised that a meeting has taken place with Halton Borough Council to discuss the issue around falling pupil numbers across the local authority. The LA have assured Exec Officers that they are not looking to decrease the number of schools within the authority; instead they are looking at how school sites can be used differently, ie they have asked if THFNW would be open to discussions re opening an additional SEN Resource Base at one of its schools. Mr Donnelly noted that he has confirmed that THFNW would be willing to discuss further, noting that another school in the Trust already has a SEN Resource Base on its site. Mr Donnelly then provided details re the financial impact of having such a resource at the school; ie it would bring additional revenue into the school, which could result in ensuring future viability of the school.</p> <p><i>Q: If this is a consideration, with primary schools operating on such small sites, we would need to ensure there are specific delegations in place?</i> <i>A: We are only researching options at this point, however if we move forwards on this we will obviously come back to the Board with a firm proposal.</i></p> <p><i>Q: With regards the school that has the potential to house a SEN Resource Base, what is the condition of their building, are there any issues that we need to be aware of?</i> <i>A: Mr Parkinson provided a brief summary of the school's (and it's out buildings) condition; noting that the main issues are in relation to the school's roof and its boiler.</i></p> <p><i>Q: Is there a Trust Estates Strategy that Trustees could have sight of, so that we can see how this school's needs fit in with the Trust-wide strategy?</i> <i>A: Mr Parkinson explained that he is currently liaising the Faithful & Gould (THFNW Capital Strategy Partner) in order to work on the Condition Data Collection (DfE programme); and that once a consolidated document is available, it will be initially presented to BF&A as part of their remit, and once agreed a copy will then be brought to Board.</i></p>				
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	Trustees noted that the Estates Strategy could assist when discussing options/ opportunities with the LA.				
5. Chair's Action Report (to receive)	Trustees received an electronic copy of the Chair's Action & Governor Membership Update 26.05.22 report prior to the meeting; and content was noted at the meeting.				
6. Coronavirus Update	<p>Mr Parkinson provided an update to Trustees.</p> <p>Mr Parkinson reported that at the recent BF&A meeting (19.05.22) it had been noted that Coronavirus is starting to disappear from the radar in respect of impact on the Trust. There are low numbers of cases across the Trust, ie 5 within the last week, and at most schools the case numbers are 0. Absence rates associated with Coronavirus are also improving. Mr Parkinson advised that schools are continuing to follow the latest guidance, and that there have been no issues raised that need to be reported to external agencies such as Public Health.</p> <p>There being no further questions, Trustees moved to the next agenda item.</p>				
7. CEO Report	<p>Trustees received electronic copies of the Performance Dashboard (dated May 2022) prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly noted that the data had been discussed in detail at the E&S meeting held on 12.05.22, and as such there was nothing in particular to draw Trustees attention to at this meeting. Mr Donnelly then asked if Trustees had any questions:</p> <p><i>Q: As schools move into the Ofsted window, are there any significant risks that Trustees need to be aware of?</i></p> <p><i>A: Mr Donnelly provided a brief overview of the schools that are likely to be inspected within the next 12 months and the reasons why; ie DPS have not been inspected for 10+ years, THS come into the Ofsted window next year, LMP are currently within the Ofsted window. Mr Donnelly also provided details in relation to Exec Officer's views on where each school currently sits in terms of potential Ofsted outcomes. Mr Donnelly also spoke about the work being undertaken with TPS in relation to 'moving towards Good'.</i></p> <p><i>Q: In your update re THS you have noted that Quality of Education has aspects of Good, can you provide further details of what these aspects are in relation to?</i></p> <p><i>A: It is around evidence, rather than judgement; ie curriculum - at the recent review conducted by the CEO/DoTL the school did not provide enough evidence to prove</i></p>				

	<p><i>conclusively that the curriculum is fully embedded across every subject area, and as such Exec Officers could not grade it as Green.</i></p> <p><i>Q: In terms of DPS, what would need to be done in order for them to secure an Outstanding grading?</i></p> <p><i>A: Currently the school are in line with national averages, but for an outstanding grading, inspectors would want to see the school achieving 'higher than average'. DPS is consistently performing at Good, and in short, performance would have to improve in order for them to reach Outstanding. Mr Donnelly also noted the challenges around achieving an Outstanding grading, noting that the bar is set high. Mr Donnelly also spoke about the challenges the school will face in the coming year, ie volatility in terms of Leadership as of Autumn Term 2022.</i></p> <p>Discussion followed regarding the demographics at DPS. Trustees also voiced concern that should DPS be graded as Good at their next Ofsted, it would essentially mean that they have 'degraded' since joining the Trust. Mr Donnelly also spoke about the changes to Ofsted framework and how this has impacted those schools who have been sitting on Outstanding gradings, ie those schools which were graded Outstanding prior to the new framework, will find it challenging to maintain the grading, as the bar is somewhat higher. Mr Donnelly also spoke about the pandemic and how this too will have impacted children's education/performance.</p> <p><i>Q: Given the issues that have been reported in respect of BWP, focus needs to move towards the primary sector of the Trust?</i></p> <p><i>A: Mr Donnelly advised that E&S have discussed BWP in detail, and that Exec Officers have reported that they are beginning to see slight signs of improvement.</i></p> <p><i>Q: With regards DPS, you would expect it to be in a better position, given its demographics?</i></p> <p><i>A: Mr Donnelly explained that a key focus for the new Exec Principal will be around Quality of Education.</i></p> <p>Further discussion followed around 'perceived' slippage in terms of Ofsted grading; and Mr Donnelly noted that once comparative data is available Exec Officers will be able to investigate further.</p> <p><i>Mr Vitalis noted that at the last E&S meeting (12.05.22) concerns re Safeguarding data were raised; and as such suggested that it may be useful to RAG-rate the Safeguarding</i></p>				
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	<p>section of the Performance Dashboard, so that it highlights any issues to Trustees. Mr Donnelly noted the suggestion and then went on to provide further explanation with regards the Safeguarding referrals data; noting that some allegations are in relation to issues that have happened outside of school, but because they have impacted our children, they are recorded within our data. Mr Donnelly also noted that Exec Officers see the data as a positive, both in terms of schools being aware of any issues affecting their children, and that schools are dealing with them appropriately. Mr Donnelly then spoke about inconsistencies around reporting of safeguarding issues, ie there are no national standards, and as such it would make RAG-rating difficult. Mr Donnelly advised that he is not however against RAG-rating the Safeguarding section as it would help to keep it high up on the agenda.</p> <p>Mr Gundersen also spoke about his observations re Safeguarding; in that there are two aspects; one around controls and ability to manage potential issues that happen in school (ie staff training, observing pupils, identifying issues, reporting etc), and the other around safeguarding issues that happen outside of school (ie once aware of the issue, how do we respond). Mr Gundersen noted that therefore some aspects could be graded green, whilst others are amber; and that there would also be a need to look at thresholds with regards Safeguarding concerns, ie at what point would the RAG-rating move to amber. All agreed.</p> <p>Q: To what extent does our school PSHE programme address issues in relation Safeguarding? A: Safeguarding is woven through our schools' PSHE programmes and schemes of work; this is seen when you look at the data; there are definitive spikes in reporting when particular safeguarding areas are covered in PSHE/lesson time. Mr Donnelly suggested that it may also be good to complete a deep dive review on PSHE provision, which included pupil voice. Ms Stevenson also suggested that it would be good to gain staff voice on this as well; noting that she would be keen to hear how staff feel they are equipped in terms of delivering the PSHE programme, ie CPD, and staff confidence/ability to deliver PSHE topics.</p> <p>Q: There are a large number of safeguarding referrals recorded in respect of LMP; does the school have the capacity to deal with these numbers of cases; are Exec Officers confident that the school does not require additional support? A: LMP are part of the THRIVE programme and as such the school has additional pastoral support. Mr Donnelly then provided further detail around the demographics</p>	<p>Deep Dive Review of PSHE provision to be conducted; report back to MAT Board. (Review to include Pupil/Staff Voice)</p>	<p>Exec Officers</p>	<p>Autumn Term 2022</p>	
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<p><i>of LMP. Mr Donnelly also assured Trustees that LMP's leadership team have not reported any issues in relation to additional support requirements. Mr Donnelly then went on to speak about issues around the LA's capacity to support, noting that Sefton (as well as other LAs across the country) are reporting that they do not have sufficient resources available to support schools. Mr Donnelly advised that as a result Exec Officers are speaking to leadership at the school to discuss how the Trust can support the child/ren and their families.</i></p> <p>Ms Williams agreed that this is an issue that is affecting a lot of authorities, and noted that she would be willing to have a conversation (in her role as CEO at Weaver Trust) with Mr Donnelly to discuss/explore the possibility of Community Hubs. Mr Donnelly confirmed that he would be interested in setting this up.</p> <p>Q: Is there any additional funding available to support the school, that the Trust can apply for whilst the LA are struggling with resources? A: A meeting of Halton-based Trusts has taken place in order to discuss these issues and to provide a joint response to send to Halton; however the issue is that there just isn't enough money in the system.</p> <p>Q: With regards Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), in what context do we use them, and how are children progressing whilst accessing the PRU and beyond? A: There are not enough places available in PRUs; there is not enough provision and currently they are not working effectively for our students. Mr Donnelly also noted that as a consequence permanent exclusions are growing. Mr Donnelly then went on to explain that similar issues are being experienced across other schools; noting that there is an increasing number of primary-aged pupils that are in need of PRU support. Mr Donnelly also spoke about a particular issue that has affected LMP, in that the LA have stated that the school is unable to access PRU support, because they are taking part in the Thrive programme. Mr Donnelly also noted that a report re the Thrive Programme will be brought to the next E&S meeting.</p> <p>Trustees also noted that it was important to work out a Trust strategic approach if resource/support is not available from the LA.</p>	<p><i>of LMP. Mr Donnelly also assured Trustees that LMP's leadership team have not reported any issues in relation to additional support requirements. Mr Donnelly then went on to speak about issues around the LA's capacity to support, noting that Sefton (as well as other LAs across the country) are reporting that they do not have sufficient resources available to support schools. Mr Donnelly advised that as a result Exec Officers are speaking to leadership at the school to discuss how the Trust can support the child/ren and their families.</i></p> <p>Ms Williams agreed that this is an issue that is affecting a lot of authorities, and noted that she would be willing to have a conversation (in her role as CEO at Weaver Trust) with Mr Donnelly to discuss/explore the possibility of Community Hubs. Mr Donnelly confirmed that he would be interested in setting this up.</p> <p>Q: Is there any additional funding available to support the school, that the Trust can apply for whilst the LA are struggling with resources? A: A meeting of Halton-based Trusts has taken place in order to discuss these issues and to provide a joint response to send to Halton; however the issue is that there just isn't enough money in the system.</p> <p>Q: With regards Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), in what context do we use them, and how are children progressing whilst accessing the PRU and beyond? A: There are not enough places available in PRUs; there is not enough provision and currently they are not working effectively for our students. Mr Donnelly also noted that as a consequence permanent exclusions are growing. Mr Donnelly then went on to explain that similar issues are being experienced across other schools; noting that there is an increasing number of primary-aged pupils that are in need of PRU support. Mr Donnelly also spoke about a particular issue that has affected LMP, in that the LA have stated that the school is unable to access PRU support, because they are taking part in the Thrive programme. Mr Donnelly also noted that a report re the Thrive Programme will be brought to the next E&S meeting.</p> <p>Trustees also noted that it was important to work out a Trust strategic approach if resource/support is not available from the LA.</p>	<p>Conversation re Community Hubs to be arranged</p>	<p>Mr Donnelly (CEO) & Ms Williams (CEO – Weaver Trust)</p>	<p>ASAP</p>	
<p>Risk and Reporting Update Trustees received an electronic copy of the Trust's Risk Register prior to the meeting. There were no further updates at the meeting, and no questions were raised.</p>					

8. Trust Committee Update	<p>Education & Standards Committee Update</p> <p>Trustees received an electronic copy of the E&S Committee board report dated 12.05.22 prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Mr Smith provided a brief overview of the report; noting that good, robust discussion had taken place around the Trust Performance Dashboard, issues around SENCO capacity at TPS, the deep-dive Safeguarding SVSH report, and the model Improvement Planning Progress documentation. Mr Smith also advised that a suggestion had been made regarding E&S/Link Trustees attending a SEF review meeting so that they can gain better understanding of the review process and the current position of the school. Mr Smith also reported that further concerns had been raised in relation to BWP's School Improvement Plan, and as a result an action/impact report will be brought to future E&S meetings.</p>				
	<p>Business, Finance & Audit Committee Update</p> <p>Trustees received an electronic copy of the BF&A Committee board report dated 19.05.22, and the BF&A Budget 2022-23 committee paper prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Mr Vitalis provided a brief overview of the report; making particular reference to the Budget 2022-23. Mr Vitalis advised that following discussions the BF&A committee supported the recommendation to approve the budget for 2022-23, noting that they were pleased to see that Exec Officers had been able to report a positive year end position, and project a positive surplus going forwards. Mr Vitalis explained that this is particularly impressive given the economic pressures the country is currently experiencing in relation to increased energy costs. Mr Vitalis also noted that BF&A have received 5-year plans for each of the schools, and that these plans indicate that the Trust is moving to a safer financial position. Mr Vitalis also provided a brief update with regards the SRMA report, noting that a review of the implementation of actions from the original report is being undertaken by the SRMA, and that a summary report will be provided to BF&A and circulated to Trustees. Mr Vitalis also noted that a couple of AoB items had been raised by Exec Officers at BF&A and that Board papers in respect of the two items had been circulated to Board on 25.05.22 (see details below)</p> <p>Mr Vitalis then asked Ms McConville (TFC) to provide a brief summary of the BF&A Budget 2022-23 committee paper.</p>				

	<p><i>Q: With regards decisions around equitable funding, ie options of GAG pooling etc, would it not be better to move these discussions to the Trustee Strategy Session rather than BF&A</i> <i>Following discussions, all agreed this course of action.</i></p> <p>Mr Vitalis confirmed that that committee agree/support the Budget 2022-23 and therefore their recommendation is that the Budget be approved by the Board.</p> <p>There being no objections, the Trustees</p> <p>RESOLVED: that The Heath Family NW budget as outlined for 2022-23 is approved</p> <p>Mr Vitalis also offered to field any questions from Trustees in respect of his summary; and there being no questions, Trustees thanked Mr Vitalis for his report.</p> <p>DBS Renewals Trustees received an electronic copy of the Board paper entitled ‘DBS Update Policy – 25.05.22’ prior to the meeting. Mr Parkinson explained the paper in detail, noting the cost implications associated to moving to the 3 yearly DBS Renewal cycle using the Update Service (£29,029.71 first year charge, moving to an annual cost of £5,889). Mr Parkinson also advised that the first year charge would be met at the centre, whilst future year costs would be picked up by local school budgets.</p> <p>There being no objections, the Trustees</p> <p>RESOLVED: that costs associated to the first year charge (£29,029.71) in respect of the Trust’s DBS Renewal cycle is added as an additional expenditure line to the MAT Central Budget 2022-23 (approved by MAT Board 26.05.22)</p> <p>TP Access Request Trustees received an electronic copy of the Board paper entitled ‘Teachers Pensions – Early Access Request 25.05.22’ prior to the meeting. Trustees discussed the request in detail at the meeting. Following discussions Trustees agreed to delay the decision on this request until they have received further advice from the Trust’s Legal Advisers (see PART II for full details)</p>	Equitable Funding to be added to the Trust Strategy Session agenda	Exec Officers	For Trustee Strategy Session 08.07.22	
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10. Link Trustee Updates	Mr Smith provided a brief summary with regards his recent visit to TPS; noting that he had met with the CoG, Exec Principal and Head of School. KS spoke about concerns raised by the school in relation to certain elements of provision (see PART II for full details)				
11. Governance Update	<p>Governance Update: Trustees received an electronic copy of the Governance Update Report May 2022 and associated attachments (Members / Trustee Vacancy Adverts & Updated Trustee Code of Conduct) prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Mrs Roberts drew attention to the following:</p> <p><i>Trustee Membership / Vacancies:</i> Mrs Roberts noted that there are currently issues with advertising via Academy Ambassadors, in that the company that facilitate the platform (New Schools Network) are in the process of winding down, and as such new vacancies cannot be uploaded. Mrs Roberts therefore asked Trustees if they could advertise THFNW Members / Trustees vacancies across their networks</p> <p><i>Trustee Code of Conduct:</i> Mrs Roberts advised that following notification from The Key in relation to a correction to their model code of conduct; THFNW Trustee Code of Conduct has been reviewed and updated accordingly. A copy of the updated Trustee Code of Conduct has therefore been circulated to Trustees for approval.</p> <p>There being no questions raised; Trustees</p> <p>RESOLVED: to approve the changes within Appendix 3 of the Trustee Code of Conduct 2021-22</p> <p><i>Delegation of Other Named Governance Roles (ie Trust/Local level Safeguarding, SEND, Careers):</i> Mrs Roberts advised that given the new approach to Risk & Reporting currently being rolled out to LGBs, Trustees needed to consider how the statutory other named Governance Roles would fit within any future LGB structure and how this links with the Trust Board and it's other committees.</p>				
12. Policy Update	There were no policy updates for this meeting.				
13. AoB	There were no AoB				

14. Date of Next Meeting	The date of the next MAT Board meeting is FRIDAY 8th July 2022. The meeting will be held at Litherland High School; and the Trustee Strategy Session will follow straight after the meeting. HS then thanked Exec Officers and Trustees for their input/contributions to today’s MAT Board meeting.				
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Meeting closed at 9.25 am

These minutes are approved as a true record of the meeting

Signed:

[H Stevenson – Chair]

Date: 8th July 2022