

The Heath Family (NW) Multi Academy Trust
PART I - Minutes from the MAT Board meeting held on
Friday 8th July 2022 at 8.00 am

Venue: Litherland High School

Present: Helen Stevenson (Chair), Karl Smith, Tony Gundersen, Janine Inglis, Annette Williams In Attendance: David Donnelly		Apologies: Christopher Davis, Alison Duckworth, Mark Stanton, Edward Vitalis Non attenders: None			
		Clerk: Trish Roberts			
Items	Discussion	Action	Who	When	Notes
1. Welcome, introductions & apologies	<p>Ms Stevenson was not in attendance at the beginning of the meeting, and so Mr Smith agreed to take on the Chair's role until Ms Stevenson arrived. Mr Smith therefore welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>Trustees then noted and accepted apologies from the following Trustees: Mr C Davis, Ms A Duckworth, Mr M Stanton & Mr E Vitalis</p>				
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 26.05.22	<p>Trustees received an electronic copy of PART I and PART II minutes from the MAT Board meeting held on 26.05.22. There were no amendments to be made and therefore the minutes were accepted as a true record and ratified.</p> <p>RESOLVE: That PART I and PART II minutes of the MAT Board meeting held on 26.05.22 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.</p>	Chair of the Board to sign agreed MAT Board Minutes from 26.05.22	H Stevenson	ASAP	
4. To review Matters Arising not included on the Agenda (to include Action Tracker)	<p>Trustees received an electronic copy of the Action Log dated 08.07.22 prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Matters Arising from Minutes of 26.05.22 <i>Community Hubs:</i> Mr Donnelly confirmed that this item is still to be addressed; and noted that he will begin a conversation with Ms A Williams at today's Trustee Strategy Session</p>				

	Trustees then reviewed progress on the Action Log dated 08.07.22. Mr Donnelly advised that all actions remain on track; and that Exec Officers will look to 'lean down' the action log so that it is not quite as wieldy. Trustees agreed that all items that are RAG-rated either Blue or Green can be removed for the next reiteration of the report.				
5. Chair's Action Report (to receive)	<p>Trustees received an electronic copy of the Chair's Action & Governor Membership Update 08.07.22 report prior to the meeting; and content was noted at the meeting.</p> <p>Mrs Roberts reported that Trustee vacancies can now be advertised with Governors for Schools, and therefore a meeting has been arranged so that THFNW Trustee vacancies can be advertised via this platform. Mr Gundersen also offered to share details of THFNW Trustee vacancies via his 'Linked In' page; other Trustees and Mr Donnelly also confirmed that they could do this as well.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly also updated Trustees with regards the discussions that have taken place in relation to the new LGB Approach to Risk & Reporting; noting that at his recent PM meeting Roz McMullen had been really impressed with the new approach, noting that it should be held up as good practice and she also asked if she could share the model with other LGBs she is working with.</p> <p>[Ms Stevenson and Ms Williams arrived to the meeting at this point]</p>	Details of THFNW Trustee vacancies to be circulated to Trustees/CEO so that information can be shared via their respective Linked In pages	TGM	ASAP	
6. CEO Report	<p>Trustees received electronic copies of the Performance Dashboard (dated July 2022) prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly provided a brief overview of the data within the report; Mr Donnelly also advised that an additional column 'Date of Update' had been included so it provided Trustees with an indication as to when each data item had last been updated.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly also noted that he had spoken to Exec Leaders about the new LGB way of working / Performance Dashboard and they seem to be happy with the new approach. Mr Donnelly advised that the school-level performance dashboard will follow the same format as the Trust-level version, and it will feed into LGB meetings in the same way the Trust version feeds into MAT Board/Committee meetings.</p>				

	<p>Mr Donnelly advised that due to the timing of MAT Board meetings, apart from the KS2 data, there has not been a lot of change since the previous report discussed on 26.05.22.</p> <p><i>Q: Is the attendance data current?</i> <i>A: Yes, the data was last updated at the end of June 2022. Most schools are running at or around national, but persistent absence is a concern at TPS.</i></p> <p><i>Q: Do we have set tolerances around attendance data within the Performance Dashboard, and could the data be RAG-rated so that it draws attention to any concerns?</i> <i>A: National attendance data has not been released by the DfE and therefore it is difficult to RAG-rate our schools' attendance against other schools; however in normal circumstances given the attendance data within the report, all of our schools would all be graded 'Red'.</i></p> <p><i>Q: In the absence of national data, should we be looking at 'Data Sharing' protocols?</i> <i>A: Anecdotally we have been told that these attendance patterns are aligned with other schools, but without national data we do not have the evidence in place. However, saying this, we can see that these attendance figures are not good.</i></p> <p><i>Trustees voiced concern about attendance</i>, noting that the current figures show that at least 10% of students within THFNW schools are not attending, and as such they would want to see robust plans in place to address these issues. Trustees noted that attendance at TPS is a real concern.</p> <p><i>Q: Taking into account the current data re persistence absence and attendance; are you confident that the attendance systems that are in place, promote good attendance?</i> <i>A: Yes, Exec Officers (Mr Donnelly CEO & Ms Black DoTL) have conducted checks around attendance and have seen evidence that systems are in place and are being followed. Mr Donnelly suggested that it may be good to look at the live attendance data on Power-Bi at next week's E&S meeting. Trustees agreed.</i></p> <p>Discussion followed regarding the persistent absence (p.a.) data; whereby it was noted that the p.a. data is linked to core groups of persistent absentees, rather than whole cohorts of children. Discussion also took place around the reasons behind persistent</p>	<p>E&S Committee to look at Live attendance data (using PowerBi) at their next meeting.</p>	<p>Exec Officers</p>	<p>Autumn Term 2022</p>	
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absenteeism, ie cultural problems – due to lockdown children have got used to not being in school and therefore do not want to return. Mr Donnelly reported that he has been completing further research re attendance systems, and has also checked THFNW systems against DfE guidance; Mr Donnelly assured Trustees that attendance systems are in place at all of THFNW schools and are in line with the DfE’s guidance, however at this point he is unable to confirm that attendance processes are being ‘done well’ in all classes. Mr Donnelly then went on to provide further information around internal/ external cultural issues that schools are facing. Mr Donnelly also noted that at a regional meeting he had recently attended it was noted that TPS’ attendance figures are at or above the percentage average for the KMBC area.

Q: In terms of attendance at TPS, do we need to look at doing things in a more innovative way, ie do we need to have a number of staff whose role is to solely concentrate on improving persistent absence at the school.

A: Mr Donnelly advised that he has completed a lot of research in this area, and at TPS Exec Leaders are looking at moving towards staffing changes.

Trustees noted that if a Head of Year also has a full time teaching commitment then it can cause issues re workload, and as such they may not have the required amount of time to concentrate on specific tasks such as improving persistent absence. Trustees suggested that the issues at TPS (re attendance/p.a.) require more proactive interventions. Mr Donnelly assured Trustees that TPS is moving to the model described by Trustees, albeit through resource-shifting rather than new appointments.

Mr Donnelly then spoke about his observations around attendance at the Delta Trust, noting that they have a complete support team who operate/oversee their pastoral systems.

Q: Is THS experiencing the same issues as TPS?

A: No, THS’ attendance systems are more embedded and as a result there is a more systematic approach at the school. There are inconsistencies at TPS, and of course we want to see their children in the classroom, however we need to be more proactive when dealing with absence at this school. Mr Donnelly also noted that there are good news stories re attendance and p.a. within our schools, ie staff have worked closely with children and have managed to get them back into school.

Q: Does the Trust have an attendance target?

	<p>A: Yes, it is in line with the national standard, ie 95%</p> <p>Discussion followed regarding whether 95% was an aspirational target, but all agreed that for now the attendance target should stay in line with the national target.</p> <p>Q: In terms of looking at children who fall below the 95% target, how do schools identify those students who are absent due to unauthorised reasons (ie non-medical)?</p> <p>A: All of our schools assess their non-attenders and they are very good at segmenting them so that specific interventions can be put in place. Our schools know which of their children are a cause for concern.</p> <p>Q: Do schools assess all children who fall below 95% attendance?</p> <p>A: Yes, they do. By knowing their student cohorts well they can identify the support needed.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly also spoke about the Trust joining the DfE Behaviour Hub programme, noting that the Trust has been paired up with Dixons Academies Trust, and that TPS will be the focus school for this programme. Mr Donnelly reported that a couple of sessions have already taken place, and that there will be a number of sessions focussing on attendance.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly also noted that the next time the DfE do an Attendance Hub session he will look to see if THFNW can get on to it.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly assured Trustees that ‘THFNW schools know where our children are’, even when they are not in school. Mr Donnelly noted that staff at all schools complete absence calls when a child is absent, and if there are no answers to the phone calls, home visits take place. Safeguarding of our students is top priority.</p> <p>Further discussion followed regarding a more innovative approach to addressing concerns re TPS’ attendance. Trustees agreed that there needs to be a clear remit around crisis management which supports the school to reach a more secure position. Trustees noted that this may also help teachers in terms of workload.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly suggested that it would be good for him to meet with the Executive Principal in order to come up with a proposal around a more innovative approach for TPS. Mr Donnelly noted that the report could then be brought to E&S; adding that given</p>	Proposal re innovative approach	Mr Donnelly	First E&S Committee meeting in	
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	<p>the timescale unfortunately the report would not be ready in time for next week's meeting and as such it would be brought to the first E&S meeting next term (Autumn Term 2022). Trustees thanked Mr Donnelly for this and confirmed their agreement with regards the reporting timeframe.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly also noted that if the Trust invests in a new strategy to attendance at TPS, the impact would not be seen straightway, however any improvement within the first year would be a good starting point.</p> <p>Ms Stevenson suggested that there is almost a need for the Trust to have a 'Special Measures' model, which can be imposed by the Trust when school data is causing concern. Mr Gundersen advised if this was to be brought in, schools would need to know that it is a temporary measure; and that there is a clear exit strategy in place.</p> <p><i>Q: When dealing with attendance; children may want to be in class more, but their own concerns stop them from coming to school, ie if they have been off for some time, anxiety can kick in. How to we motivate students to return to school?</i> <i>A: We have had conversations with Exec Leaders in relation to this, ie we have discussed how we welcome our students back into school; we have also looked at the learning pressures that children can experience on their return to school, ie catching-up on missed lessons whilst trying to keep up-to-date with the lessons they are attending; and as such teachers now identify key items/areas of learning for those students who have been absent and meet with them on their return to run through these details. By doing this the catch-up pressures on children are lessened.</i></p> <p><i>Q: If the Form Tutor role was taken on by Support Staff, rather than Teachers; wouldn't it free up time for Teachers, so that they can support those students with 'lost or missed' learning?</i> <i>A: By Teachers taking on Form Tutor roles it provides opportunity for the Teacher to build positive pastoral relationships with the child; also schools just do not have enough Support Staff to cover the number of Form Tutor roles within each school.</i></p> <p><i>Q: Does each Head of Department have a Form Group; and if they didn't would it provide them with the time to concentrate on catch-up?</i> <i>A: Yes, each HoD does have a Form Group; maybe this is something we can discuss in more detail during the Trustee Strategy session.</i></p>	to attendance at TPS to be brought to E&S		Autumn Term 2022	
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	<p>Discussion followed regarding the curriculum for upper year groups (Yr 10/11); and Mr Donnelly provided a brief overview of the curriculum offer at THFNW schools, as well as national expectations/standards.</p> <p>The Board also discussed whether schools are able to look at ‘narrowing’ the curriculum offer so as to encourage children to attend school, ie a child may not attend school if they are struggling with the number of subjects they are expected to learn, and therefore if the school could look to narrow the curriculum for that child their learning experience could be more positive and as a result the child may be happy to attend. Mr Donnelly explained the support that is offered to children at THFNW schools; and also advised that an analysis of numbers involved/support offered could be provided to Trustees.</p> <p><i>Q: Which of our schools are likely to have an Ofsted visit within the next two terms?</i> <i>A: BWP’s results are of concern and therefore are likely to trigger a full Section 5 inspection; DPS, LMP & THS are due an inspection, HPS are likely to be inspected within the next year; and TPS are due a review by the end of year. Mr Donnelly also noted that next Wednesday (13.07.22) is the cut-off point for inspections taking place this year.</i></p> <p>KS2 Results Presentation Mr Donnelly shared an initial ‘flash’ report re KS2 SATs results on screen, noting that unfortunately due to results only being released this week, details could not be shared with Trustees prior to this meeting.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly then provided a school by school overview.</p> <p><i>BWP: RWM Combined: 2019 – 50%, 2022 – 11%. Mr Donnelly provided a detailed verbal report to Trustees; thorough and robust discussion then took place (see PART II for full details of discussions/challenge).</i></p> <p>Mr Donnelly advised Trustees that the last comparative data was from 2019, and also provided a brief summary in relation to SATs Tests/Grading structures. Mr Donnelly then went on to explain the Trust/other primary school data in detail:</p> <p><i>Trust: RWM Combined: 2019 – 54%, 2022 – 53%. Mr Donnelly explained that the national figure had dropped by 6%, and so in real terms the Trust’s result for 2022 had</i></p>	<p>In relation to ‘narrowing the curriculum’ discussions (08.07.22), analysis of numbers involved/support offered to be brought to E&S</p>	<p>Exec Officers</p>	<p>Autumn Term 2022</p>	
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	<p>actually increased by 5% against national. Mr Donnelly also noted that at this point Pupil Premium data was not available, however once it has been received, it will provide an even better picture.</p> <p>Trustees noted that if the figures were on PowerBi, they could have interrogated the data further, ie they could have had a look at the impact that BWP's performance has had on the Trust's overall outcomes. Trustees also asked Mr Donnelly to explain the RAG-rating that had been used on the KS2 results flash report; Mr Donnelly noted that Red signified a drop in performance, Amber the school had stayed the same and Green the school had improved.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly also spoke about the anomalies that have come out of the data, ie in some schools their reading scores have come in lower than their writing scores, which is out of the norm. Mr Donnelly also spoke about the learning challenges families/children experienced during lockdown.</p> <p>Q: Do you know what the KS1 data is currently? A: No, not yet</p> <p>DPS: RWM Combined: 2019 – 67%, 2022 – 67%. Mr Donnelly noted that although there had been no movement, in real terms DPS had increased by 6% against National. Mr Donnelly also noted that it was DPS' Maths result that had dropped the result down.</p> <p>Q: Who else sees this data? A: Schools have to publish a link to the school and college performance tables and their school's performance tables page. The committee also noted that most parents will check performance data of those schools closest to them when they are reviewing/ deciding on which school/s to send their children to.</p> <p>HPS: RWM Combined: 2019 – 40%, 2022 – 49%. Mr Donnelly noted that given the 9% increase, in real terms HPS had increased by 15% against National.</p> <p>Q: But HPS are still not at National Standard? A: Yes, you are right in that they have not achieved the 59% national target, however the results are moving in the right direction and to achieve this result despite the impact of Covid, 15% improvement is stunning.</p>				
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Q: What we now need to see is sustained improvement?

A: We totally agree. HPS' performance should be celebrated, but we will not be resting on our laurels, their result is good, but there is more to do.

LMP: RWM Combined: 2019 – 83%, 2022 – 68%. Mr Donnelly noted that it had been reported in the past that LMP's 2019 results were produced by a stunning cohort; and that the 2022 results are now back at where they were in 2018. Mr Donnelly added that LMP are still 9% ahead of national standard; and when you look at their results they do evidence improvement over time.

Q: There is quite a considerable gap between LMPs Reading score (90%) and their writing score (68%), do we need to look at their curriculum to see what can be done to close the gap; also when you look at the figures in more detail, although you say 2019 was an abortion, some of their figures show that it wasn't, ie Reading and Maths expected standard scores.?

A: Yes, it was the Writing result that dropped significantly.

Mr Donnelly also noted that schools are looking at question-based analysis of the curriculum; and that there is a need for them to try to get a blended/balanced curriculum which enables all data points to perform well.

PFP: RWM Combined: 2019 – 38%, 2022 – 65%. Mr Donnelly noted that given the 27% increase, in real terms PFP had increased by 33% against National.

Mr Donnelly noted that given these results (and if you take BWP out of the equation), it evidences that on the whole, the primary side of the Trust is working well.

Further discussion followed; Trustees noted that the improvements were good, however there is a need to look at whether the Trust is doing enough for its primary schools. Discussion also took place around structures that have led to the improvements in English/Maths at PFP.

Q: With regards data, in discussion with Headteachers, do we or should we be setting targets?; also would it be worth us looking at the results in graph form so that movement can be more easily identified?

A: In relation to the question re target setting, there are two aspects; 1 - individual pupil targets – Mr Donnelly noted that the Trust uses Fischer Family Trust (FFT) for

data tracking. He then went on to provide a brief overview with regards the data FFT provides, noting that the FFT data formulates the basis of conversations that take place with every teacher and child as part of the annual target setting process. 2 - CEO Performance Management – Mr Donnelly noted that the Board sets his targets as part of the annual PM/Appraisal process. Mr Donnelly also acknowledged that targets in themselves do not deliver improvement; however all staff share the same appetite with regards all children achieving their potential. Mr Donnelly also spoke about the results data, noting that results had only been received on Tuesday and as such the report that was being shared was purely a flash-report for this meeting; Mr Donnelly added that Exec Officers/Leaders will be looking at the results in more detail once all the data has been received (Sep/Oct 2022).

Discussion followed in relation to Benchmarking; and Trustees noted that they look forward to receiving a results update report once all the figures have come in.

Discussion also took place with regards the composition of schools within the Trust, and how this compares with other Trusts.

Q: The Ofsted risk is the risk we need to look at; from the data we can see that there is a major risk for one school, and that we need to provide intervention/support for them as a matter of urgency; however are we secure enough in terms of staffing at our other schools, ie have we got our best teachers in the right roles in order to reach our marginal schools?

A: Yes, I feel that the Executive Principal programme is working and the data is backing this up.

Q: With regards the KS2 results, would it be possible for Trustees to see a 3-year trend?

A: Yes, this is what we would normally produce for you, but as there has not been any comparative data for the past two years, for the flash-report we used the last comparative data that was available.

Q: As there is an issue in relation to Writing across the Trust, will there be a primary strategy meeting that focusses on this?

A: Yes

	<p><i>Q: There are reading / maths volunteering programmes, but I have never heard of a writing volunteering programme; do they exist and if so, is it something we could look into/use?</i></p> <p><i>A: Schools are using less and less volunteers; but also there is a technical side to writing which is more difficult, and as such volunteers are harder to come by.</i></p> <p>Discussion following regarding grammar; ie the expectations/terminology that primary-aged children are expected to learn/understand. Discussion also took place around how reading impacts writing; and it was also acknowledged that environmental experiences can impact writing as well, ie if a child has not experienced the seaside, how can they write about it descriptively. Ms Stevenson also spoke about an 'Ignition Day' she had recently attended at another school, noting that these type of events can kick-start a child's interest in relation to that particular area of focus.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly noted that if we can get all of our children to be good readers it will improve both their spoken language skills and their written language skills.</p> <p><i>Q: Is there a happy spot in which we can ensure that our children grow up to be good citizens, is there something we can take away/trial from other establishments, including schools within the Trust?</i></p> <p><i>A: Yes, there are good practices out there; again this is the purpose of today's Trustee Strategy session.</i></p>				
7. Review of Meeting Schedule 2022-23	<p>Trustees received an electronic copy of the Trustee Schedule of Meetings 2022-23 prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly advised that the full Trust Board meetings have been agreed, however the meeting dates for committees were still to be arranged/agreed.</p>				
8. AoB	There were no AoB				
9. Date of Next Meeting	<p>The date of the next MAT Board meeting is Thursday 20th October 2022. The venue for the meeting is still to be agreed, and will be circulated to Trustees as soon as it is known.</p> <p>HS then thanked Exec Officers and Trustees for their input/contributions to today's MAT Board meeting.</p>				

Meeting closed at 10.35 am

These minutes are approved as a true record of the meeting

Signed:

[H Stevenson – Chair]

Date: 20th October 2022