

The Heath Family (NW) Multi Academy Trust
PART I - Minutes from the MAT Board meeting held on
Thursday 9th February 2023 at 8.00 am

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

<u>Trustees Present:</u> Helen Stevenson (Chair), Edward Vitalis, Tony Gundersen, Annette Williams <u>In Attendance:</u> David Donnelly (CEO), Sharon Black (DOTL), Craig Parkinson (DOO), Paula Evans (DOHR)		<u>Apologies:</u> Christopher Davis, Janine Inglis, Karl Smith, Non attenders: None		
		Clerk (TGM): Trish Roberts		
Items	Discussion	Action	Who	When
1. Welcome, introductions & apologies	<p>Ms Stevenson welcomed everyone to the meeting, and the Trust's new Director of HR was introduced to those Trustees who had not yet met her.</p> <p>Trustees then noted and accepted apologies from the following Trustee/s: Mr C Davis, Ms J Inglis, Mr K Smith.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly also requested for an item to be added to AoB. Trustees agreed for this to happen (see agenda item 12 for details of discussion).</p>			
2. Declaration of Business and Pecuniary Interests	<p>Trustees received a copy of the Trust's Register of Business Interests 2022-23 prior to the meeting. At the meeting Ms Stevenson declared that she is now the Chair of a local academy board at Waterhead Academy, and Mr Vitalis declared that he is now a Governor at The Apprenticeship Academy. There were no further updates to be reported; Trustees also reviewed the Register against the agenda prior to the meeting and no declarations were received in respect of this meeting.</p>	Reg. of Bus. Interests to be updated to reflect the changes declared at MAT Board 09.02.23	TGM	ASAP
3. To receive/ ratify PT I and PT II Minutes from THFNW Board mtg held on 15.12.22	<p>Trustees received an electronic copy of PART I and PART II minutes from the MAT Board meeting held on 15.12.22. 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 15.12.22 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.</p>	Agreed MAT Board Minutes from 15.12.22 to be formally signed	Vice Chair	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 09.02.22 prior to the meeting. At the meeting Exec Officers provided an update in relation to key items.</p> <p><i>Chief Financial Officer Post:</i> Mr Donnelly reported that interviews have taken place, and two Trustees were involved in the process (Mr Vitalis & Ms Williams). Mr Donnelly advised that the process was successful and a new CFO has been appointed; and they are currently in the process of completing their</p>			

	<p>safer recruitment checks, and will be attending a few induction days prior to their start date (May 2023).</p> <p><i>Safeguarding Training/PREVENT:</i> Mr Donnelly confirmed that all Trustees have either completed their Governor Safeguarding Training or have booked a place on the session in May. In terms of PREVENT training, there are still a number of certificates yet to come in; Mr Donnelly asked Trustees to send the certificates to the TGM as soon as possible, and also to get in touch if they are having any trouble accessing the link to the training course.</p> <p><i>Equitable Funding:</i> Mr Donnelly advised that this action has been moved to later in the year so that it can be added to the 2023/24 budget round, and it will also enable the new CFO to be involved.</p> <p><i>PowerBi Training:</i> Mr Donnelly confirmed that a further training session has been arranged (venue: Comberbach Primary) and that Mr Vitalis and Ms Williams will be attending. Mr Donnelly also opened the invitation to any other Trustee who would like to/are available to attend.</p> <p><i>KCSiE Sign-Off:</i> it was noted that not all Trustees have sent confirmation that they had read and understood the KCSiE document. Mr Donnelly confirmed that this can be done either via an email to the TGM or via ticking the declaration on the Trustee’s personal record on GovernorHub.</p>			
<p>5. Chair’s Action Report (to receive)</p>	<p>Trustees received an electronic copy of the Chair’s Action & Governor Membership Update 09.02.23 report prior to the meeting; and content was noted at the meeting.</p> <p>Ms Stevenson praised the TGM for her efforts in recruiting governors; noting that this is not an easy task, especially considering how the number of volunteers for governance roles is steadily decreasing.</p> <p><i>Trustee Vacancies:</i> Mr Donnelly noted that an advert for the Trustee vacancies had been included in the meeting pack, and asked if Trustees could advertise the roles via their own networks. Ms Stevenson kindly offered to advertise the roles via Satis Education, noting that they would be uploaded to The Guardian and Schools Week.</p> <p>Mr Parkinson also drew Trustees’ attention to the new Summary Overview table that had been included at the end of the document.</p> <p><i>Governor Constitution:</i> discussion took place around Governor Constitution and it was agreed that LGBs should look to move to a Constitution of no more than 9 Governors; Trustees confirmed that this would only happen over time, eg through natural wastage etc. Mr Donnelly noted that he is due to attend the next cycle of LGB meetings, and that he has already started these conversations with Chairs.</p> <p><i>Chair of Governors & Succession Planning:</i> Mr Donnelly noted that two Chairs of Governors are due to retire at the end of this academic year (both are Chair of Governors at two schools within the Trust). Trustees noted the importance of ensuring that the Trust has the right Chairs in place, ie the Chair needs to be strong enough to be able to empower their Governing Body.</p>	<p>Advert re Trustee vacancies to be emailed to Satis Education</p>	<p>TGM</p>	<p>ASAP</p>

	<p>Q: Is there a succession plan in place for these LGBs? A: LGBs are looking at succession and normal practice is for the LGB to nominate a Chair; the nomination then comes to the Trust for approval. TGM also spoke about a newly appointed Governor at PFP who has chairing experience and is interested in the Future Chairs pathway.</p> <p><i>Staff Governors:</i> Trustees noted the number of Staff Governor vacancies; discussion followed in relation to whether senior leaders could be encouraged to serve on another Trust LGB in order to gain experience. Mr Donnelly will talk to Exec Leaders about this.</p>	CEO to speak to Exec Leaders re SLT members serving on Trust LGBs in order to gain experience	CEO / Exec Leaders	ASAP
<p>6. Performance Dashboard</p>	<p>Trustees received electronic copies of the Performance Dashboard (dated Jan 2023) prior to the meeting. Mr Donnelly provided a detailed overview of the data within the report;</p> <p><i>Basic Data</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of first choices: the secondary data is based on indicative figures; Mr Donnelly then provided further detail in relation to individual schools, but noted that on the whole the figures look positive when compared to the same point last year. <p>Q: Have you not received indicative figures in relation to primary children? A: No, the data is not due to be received until April – in conversations with Primary Heads nothing has been brought forward at this point.</p> <p><i>Evaluating Provision Framework & Performance Data</i> Mr Donnelly noted that no changes had been made to this section since the last Board Meeting (Dec 2023). Trustees raised a number of questions in relation to this section (see PART II).</p> <p>Performance Data (Secondary School Forecasting figures) Trustees raised a number of questions and discussion ensued about each schools’ data (see PART II).</p> <p><i>Attendance</i> Mr Donnelly reported that the overall attendance YTD figure has dipped this term, adding that this is in line with national trends. Mr Donnelly then explained the data in further detail. Mr Donnelly also noted that the Trust is engaged with the National Attendance Hub; Ms Black then provided an update in relation to the Attendance Hub meeting she had attended.</p> <p>Ms Black noted that attendance of FSM pupils is a significant issue across the Trust; and as such there is a need to develop a strategy on how the Trust can support their vulnerable families. Ms Black also reported that TPS are developing a reintegration hub, which will introduce a carefully planned process to support and screen those children who have been away from education for a significant period.</p> <p>Q: Do we work with CAMHs? A: We do, but we would like more support.</p>			

	<p>Q: Is there a correlation between the distance a child lives away from school and attendance? A: This would be a really good piece of analysis to do.</p> <p>Ms Williams also spoke about schools introducing a food strategy. Ms Black confirmed that Exec Officers/Leaders have spoken about introducing a hot breakfast club; Mr Donnelly also confirmed that this will be investigated further.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly then went on to explain that attendance figures will dip again following the Teacher’s strike day, adding that attendance not only dipped on the day, but also the day after. Mr Donnelly assured Trustees that the desire was for THFNW schools to remain open as much as possible on strike days; however attendance was affected further in that if siblings were in different year groups, some parents took the decision to keep both children at home, even if school was open to one of them.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly then went on to speak about discussions that have taken place with Heads / LAs around how we can support our families. Mr Donnelly then provided some examples of support being offered, ie signposting families to support on offer, uniform – if a child is without uniform, schools are provided it for them etc. Mr Donnelly reassured Trustees that our schools know their children and their families well.</p> <p>Q: Persistent absence YTD; these figures are not good? A: There are core groups with significant challenges and local authorities are supporting. We will work with the advice we are given through the Attendance Hubs and will share it across all schools. Mr Donnelly also provided further details in relation to the work that Mr Jardine is doing in relation to setting up the reintegration hub at TPS. Mr Donnelly also noted that this will be set up as a trial, and if successful will be disseminated to other schools within the Trust.</p> <p>Trustees/Exec Officers also agreed that some attendance strategies (ie rewards) will not work for some p.a. children, ie they will not engage. All noted that for these children, schools will need to drill down into the root of the problem.</p> <p>Q: Do we have a family welfare officer in schools? A: Yes, we do. Mr Donnelly then provided details in relation to their role.</p> <p>Discussion followed in relation to who needs to be involved in pupil welfare reviews; Ms Williams noted that in her experience in primary education, if a primary child is involved in the discussion it can help them to understand the impact that their non-attendance is having on their own learning. It was also noted that Governors can have a role to play in welfare reviews.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly confirmed that Exec Officers are working with the Attendance Hub advisor in order to identify if there is anything the Trust/schools can do to improve attendance. Ms Black also noted the high numbers of FSM children within THFNW.</p> <p>Current HR Casework was also added to the latest version of the dashboard.</p>	<p>Explore if a correlation exercise can be completed (distance a child lives away from school and their attendance)</p>	<p>CEO</p>	<p>ASAP</p>
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	<p>Budget Surplus/Deficit/Variance: Mr Parkinson advised that there was nothing of significance to note, adding that the difference in variance is mainly due to the phasing of budgets. Budgets have since been revised and the variance is around £20K; however the Trust is able to subsume the increase, as the overall Trust surplus is around £450K.</p> <p>Staffing Spend as % of income Q: LMP's staffing is reported as 84% but isn't this above the DfE recommendation of 75%? A: It is, but LMP have a high number of children on EHCs and therefore there is a need to employ additional staff to support them with their specific needs.</p> <p>Q: Do you keep literally to 1:1 provision? A: Yes, we do for primaries, however in secondaries TA hours can be pooled on occasions to meet student needs more effectively.</p> <p>Complaints: Mr Parkinson confirmed that the Stage 3 complaint has now been concluded.</p> <p>Survey Data: Mr Donnelly advised that the next survey cycle will take place after Easter.</p> <p>There being no further questions, Ms Stevenson thanked Exec Officers for their update.</p>			
<p>7. School Improvement Capacity</p>	<p>Trustees received a document entitled 'Bridging the gap between decision making and implementation' prior to the meeting.</p> <p><i>Behaviour Hub/Dixons Academy:</i> Mr Donnelly updated Trustees in relation the work currently underway with Dixons Academy. Mr Donnelly advised that this piece of work goes right back to the Trust's vision and values, and explained how it will link into the work with the Behaviour Hub. Mr Donnelly added that the Assistant Director of Teaching & Learning (Pupil Premium) is leading on this; and that you can already see a marked improvement in behaviour at the lead school who is working with the Hub.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly also spoke about the away day that had recently taken place; Mr Donnelly also assured Trustees that this is not about THFNW becoming Dixons, it more to do with learning about what they do well and how they do it; this knowledge can then be used when looking at how THFNW can become the best version of itself.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly added that once these foundations are in place, Exec Officers/Leaders will be able to build on this going forwards in order to formulate the Trust Strategic approach. Mr Donnelly noted that this is about ensuring individual accountability, and that it will lead to greater ownership of the Trust Strategy.</p> <p><i>The Challenge Academy Trust (TCAT):</i> Mr Donnelly noted that as part of the DfE's Trust and School Improvement Offer, TCAT senior leaders visited THFNW on 03.02.23. They met with a wide range of school improvement staff members, including Senior Trust Leaders, a Trustee representative, as well as</p>			

	<p>senior, middle and mainstream teachers from across the Trust. Mr Donnelly also explained how THFNW were partnered up with TCAT.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly then went on to speak about the visit, noting that their Trust has some really effective processes, procedures and strategies in place; and as such this exercise was found to be helpful. Mr Donnelly outlined the purpose of the visit in further detail, noting that it was a gap analysis of school improvement exercise. Ms Williams also provided a brief summary in relation to the meeting she had with one of the TCAT team.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly then provided a summary of the report itself; explaining that the hypothesis is that there is a gap between decision making and long term strategy, ie responsive/reactive, rather than strategic. Mr Donnelly noted that THFNW have processes in place that are really good, but that they are not owned by the schools themselves. Discussion followed (see PART II for full details)</p> <p>Q: We can see that there are strengths within THFNW in relation to looking at best practice and sharing it with others; could it be that our schools see themselves as individual schools in a Trust, rather than a group of Trust schools?</p> <p>A: Yes, this is more the case within the secondary sector; our primaries are collaborating well.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly also confirmed that there are some signs of collaboration in secondary schools; Ms Black provided examples, including the work of network groups.</p> <p>Q: From these network groups, do the leaders then work with class teachers?</p> <p>A: Yes</p> <p>Mr Donnelly then spoke about the previous Education & Standards meeting, where it had been discussed/agreed that there was a need to look at a Director of Effectiveness and Standards role (see PART II for details of discussion).</p> <p>Following these discussions all Trustees present agreed for Mr Donnelly to work with Ms Stevenson in order to secure a fixed-term appointment for Director of Effectiveness and Standards: Trustees therefore</p> <p>RESOLVED: To appoint a Director of Effectiveness and Standards, potentially on a 6-12 month fixed-term contract</p>	CEO to work with CoB to secure a suitable individual for the role.	CEO / Chair of the Board	ASAP
<p>8. Risk & Reporting Update</p>	<p>Trustees received a copy of the Trust’s current Risk Register prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly provided a brief summary in relation to those items which had changed/were of concern.</p> <p>A3.2: following school assessment this risk item was upgraded to Green. Mr Donnelly explained that the decision was also made now that the Director of HR has been appointed, and as part of their role they will be looking at recruitment and retention.</p>			

	<p>A9.5: following school assessment this risk item was upgraded to Green.</p> <p>Q: Is this grading cross-referenced to the EPF?</p> <p>A: Not entirely, but the Heads do present their EPF at LGB-level.</p> <p>Trustees thanked Exec Officers for their presentation/input noting that the proposed changes made complete sense and as such they were happy to endorse.</p>			
9. Trust Committee Updates	Trustees received a copy of the E&S Committee Board Report (09.02.23) prior to the meeting. No further updates were provided at the meeting.			
10. Link Trustee Updates	No Link Trustee updates were provided at the meeting.			
11. Governance Update	Trustees received a copy of the Governance Update report 09.02.23 prior to the meeting. No further updates were provided at the meeting, and no questions were raised.			
12. AoB	<p>Trustees received a copy of a document entitled '<i>Cleaning Tender – Litherland Campus</i>' prior to the meeting.</p> <p>At the meeting Mr Parkinson provided a summary of the procurement exercise that had been undertaken and explained how the decision had been arrived at. Mr Parkinson also assured Trustees that if this contract was to be awarded, there would be no detrimental impact to the budget. Mr Parkinson also noted that moving forwards, this procurement process could be used for other schools on a call off basis, which would then open up options to smaller schools within the Trust where their cleaning requirements would not have traditionally resulted in a full tender exercise, thereby attracting the larger industry providers that this opportunity has.</p> <p>Following discussion Trustees,</p> <p>RESOLVED: that subject to due diligence and appropriate standstill periods, that Vertas Group Ltd are awarded the cleaning services contract for the Trust's Litherland Campus site.</p> <p>NLG – Review of Governance</p> <p>Mr Donnelly spoke to Trustees about the need to complete the Self-Evaluation exercise with Carsten Kressell (NLG). Trustees advised that they understood the importance of undertaking self-evaluation, but added that given their busy work schedules and other Trust meetings they need to attend over the next few weeks, there is little scope in terms of getting Trustees all together for an additional meeting. Trustees suggested a compromise, in that they could complete the 21 questions questionnaire electronically, and then a representative from the Board could meeting with the NLG in order to discuss any issues/questions that may rise from the responses.</p> <p>Trustees asked Exec Officers to contact the NLG to see if this would be possible.</p>	NLG to be contacted re Self-Evaluation process (as per proposal in AOB MAT Board 09.02.23)	Exec Officers	ASAP

13. Date of Next Meeting	The date of the next MAT Board meeting is Thursday 30 th March 2023, venue to be arranged. Ms Stevenson thanked Exec Officers and Trustees for their input/contributions to today's MAT Board meeting.			
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Meeting closed at 10.15 am

These minutes are approved as a true record of the meeting

Signed:

[H Stevenson – Chair]

Date: 30th March 2023