

The Heath Family (NW) Multi Academy Trust
PART I - Minutes from the MAT Board meeting held on
Thursday 30th March 2023 at 8.00 am

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

<p><u>Trustees Present:</u> Helen Stevenson (Chair), Karl Smith, Christopher Davis, Tony Gundersen, Annette Williams</p> <p><u>In Attendance:</u> David Donnelly (CEO), Sharon Black (DOTL), Craig Parkinson (DOO), Paula Evans (DOHR), Sarah Greer (Exec Principal BWP, HPS, LMP), Ashleigh Hudson (Interim Head of School BWP)</p>		<p><u>Apologies:</u> Edward Vitalis, Janine Inglis, Non attenders: None</p>		
		Clerk (TGM): Trish Roberts		
Items	Discussion	Action	Who	When
1. Welcome, introductions & apologies	<p>Ms Stevenson welcomed everyone to the meeting; and asked Ms Greer and Ms Hudson to provide a short introduction in relation to the role they perform within the Trust.</p> <p>Trustees then noted and accepted apologies from the following Trustee/s: Mr E Vitalis and Ms J Inglis.</p> <p>Ms Stevenson then noted that due to some Trustees needing to leave before the end of the meeting, it was therefore her intention to re-order the items within the agenda, so as to ensure those Trustees were able to take part in the discussion of specific agenda items. Agenda items were then discussed in the following order: 1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 10, 3, 5, 6, 7, 11</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. There were no updates reported at the meeting; Trustees also reviewed the Register against the agenda prior to the meeting and no declarations were received in respect of this meeting.</p>			
3. To receive/ ratify PT I and PT II Minutes from THFNW Board mtg held on 09.02.23	<p>Trustees received an electronic copy of PART I and PART II minutes from the MAT Board meeting held on 09.02.23. 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 09.02.23 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly advised that the draft minutes are reviewed internally by the SLT prior to circulation, and any discussions which are seen as sensitive are moved to PART II; Trustees were asked if they were happy to continue with this approach – all in attendance agreed.</p>	Agreed MAT Board Minutes from 09.02.23 to be formally signed	Vice Chair	ASAP

<p>4. Bridgewater Park Update</p>	<p>Mr Donnelly provided a brief introduction in relation to this item, and then Ms Greer provided her presentation:</p> <p>Context (Slide 1) Ms Greer explained that she had started working with BWP, in a Trust Leader support capacity, whilst the previous Principal had been in place; and then following the Principal’s absence she took on the role of Interim Exec Principal and Ms Hudson took on the role of Interim Head of School. Ms Greer noted that the Principal has since left the school and the ‘interim’ leadership structure is still in place. Ms Greer also provided details in relation to the teaching team, noting that it is a fledgling team, in that there are 3 ECTs, 1 teacher new to the school and 1 teacher in their 3rd year of teaching. Ms Greer also provided details re staff absence, noting that 1 teacher is currently off ill and 1 is due to go on maternity leave next year. Ms Greer assured Trustees that staff are working hard and that they are stabilising the school at a rapid pace. Ms Greer also spoke about possible plans for the future (see PART II minutes for details).</p> <p>Vulnerabilities (Slide 1) Ms Greer reported that KS2 data is looking better for the coming year, adding that the school just needs time to embed the changes. Ms Greer also noted other vulnerabilities in terms of attendance, pupil numbers/surplus places and the instability within the teaching team.</p> <p>Enabling and embedding strong teaching and learning culture (Slide 2) Ms Hudson noted that when Ms Greer joined BWP they evaluated all aspects to identify where the school needed to go, from this a high quality plan was drawn up and put in place which would drive rapid improvement. Ms Greer added that there is still a long way to go; noting that as things are implemented, they are ensuring that this has been embedded before moving on to the next part of the plan.</p> <p>Ms Greer also reported that the Core Power approach has been removed; and as such this means that children remain with their class teacher for all subjects. Ms Greer also noted that children are now reading and writing every day; Ms Greer added that as a result of the implementation of reading across the school and the introduction of Pathways to Writing, progress is phenomenal. Ms Greer went on to note that the school is still in the early stages of implementation, however KS2 combined is currently at 55% (11% 2021-22) and phonics is 67% (42% 2021-22). Ms Greer added that this data evidences that clear improvement is being achieved; noting that constant monitoring and scrutiny into class data continues as a part of the ongoing approach to quality assurance. Ms Greer assured Trustees that implementation and embedding of the Rapid Improvement Plan (RIP) is running at pace. Ms Greer also spoke about ‘up-levering’ practice, noting that all primaries are now using the Trust’s curriculum, and as such it has enabled Trust primary schools to provide support for staff at BWP.</p>			
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Impact (Slide 3)

Ms Greer then provided details with regards the impact of the RIP, ie teaching team is buoyant; culture, vision is right and school is on right path; rapid improvement as a result of the coaching approach in English/Maths; teaching and learning improvements (books, pupil voice); consistency; behaviour is significantly improved; strategic choices and good foundation for improved future outcomes.

Ms Stevenson thanked Ms Greer and Ms Hudson for their update, and then asked Trustees if they had any questions.

Q: You noted that the KS2 combined (55%) is markedly improved, but we also need to note that this is a different cohort, as such it is important to look at 'progress made' alongside 'context'.

A: You are right in that it is cohort specific, you have to teach/push children to maximise their potential. Ms Hudson is also teaching Yr 6. It is also different this year, in that during the previous year a number of Yr 6 children were being pulled out of class in order to complete their Core Power sessions; this year all children will be with their class teacher so there is much more consistency. It's all about knowing where each child is up to, ie KS1 cohort are at a lower level which is as a result of Covid, this cohort has been significantly impacted as they experienced 'lost' learning in their reception curriculum, and it will take time to close this gap. Ms Greer also noted that the writing/reading approach is having impact, adding that she has reviewed what HPS/LMP are doing in terms of accuracy of data and quality assurance, and this practice is now being mirrored in BWP.

Q: What are you doing for those children who do not get over the line?

A: We are pushing as much as we can, we will do everything we can to support them. These children are going to be much more ready for the move to secondary school. Also, next year we are investing in character curriculum which will ensure that children are socially and emotionally equipped for the next step in their education. Children are making rapid progress and we can see evidence of this in their books. We are invested in these children and we will do everything we can.

Q: Have you got all the support you need?

A: Yes we have; and we also know that if we need any further support all we need to do is ask. Also, the other schools within the Trust have and continue to provide support to BWP.

Mr Donnelly then thanked Ms Greer and Ms Hudson for the hard work that has taken place over the past 12 months, noting that it is difficult to accelerate improvement whilst keeping both children and staff on board with the changes that are taking place. Mr Donnelly noted that if the KS2 combined figure of 55% was to be achieved, it would be a huge improvement from last year. Ms Stevenson also noted that Ms Greer and Ms Hudson must speak up if they needed anything; and thanked both for their presentation/responses.

[Ms Greer/Ms Hudson left the meeting 8.17 am]

<p>5. To review Matters Arising not included on the Agenda (to include Action Tracker)</p>	<p>Trustees received an electronic copy of the Action Log dated 30.03.23 prior to the meeting. At the meeting Exec Officers noted that there were no further updates, and then asked if Trustees were happy to approve the items highlighted for removal. All trustees in attendance agreed for this to happen.</p>			
<p>6. Chair's Action Report (to receive)</p>	<p>Trustees received an electronic copy of the Chair's Action & Governor Membership Update 30.03.23 report prior to the meeting; and content was noted at the meeting.</p> <p>Exec Officers drew attention to the governor vacancies at LMP, noting that the LGB have now agreed to move to an LGB of 9, and as such the vacancies have decreased from 5 to 3. Mrs Roberts also advised that a prospective governor has been identified for the Trust Appointed governor role at LMP and that they are currently going through the recruitment process.</p>			
<p>7. Governance Update</p>	<p>Trustees received a copy of the Governance Update report 30.03.23 prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Mrs Roberts drew attention to key items within the update report, noting recent email communications that have been sent to Trustees (re PREVENT training & Governance Newsletter Spring Term 2023).</p> <p>Mr Donnelly also spoke about the NLG review; noting that the NLG review has been deferred on a couple of occasions as Trustees had expressed an interest for this meeting to take place in person. Trustees had noted that the face-to-face meeting format allowed for a full proper exchange of views to take place.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly explained that although the delays were necessary it does however mean that the NLG Review is now overdue, and as such we would be looking for the review to be completed at the next Board meeting (Thursday 25th May, at Halsnead Primary School). Mr Donnelly therefore requested that as many Trustees as possible were in attendance for this meeting.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly also reported that following the recent meeting poll which looked to ascertain what time is best for Board/Committee meetings to take place, 8.00 am had come out as the preferred time.</p> <p>Trustees requested that a reminder email be sent out to confirm the date/time for the next Board meeting (incl. NLG review).</p> <p>Q: How is the NLG review different to the governance review carried out by Hill Dickinson? A: The NLG review has been requested by the DfE.</p> <p>Mrs Roberts also provided an update in relation to a prospective Trustee that has applied for the role. The prospective Trustee has met informally with Ms Stevenson and Mr Donnelly; and their application has now moved to the formal recruitment stage with the Members.</p>	<p>Email to be sent to Trustees to confirm date/time of next Board meeting which will include NLG Review</p>	<p>TGM</p>	<p>ASAP</p>

<p>8. Performance Dashboard</p>	<p><i>[Mr Gundersen arrived to the meeting during this agenda item]</i></p> <p>Trustees received electronic copies of the Performance Dashboard (dated Mar 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"> • Ofsted: DPS' Ofsted grading will be updated once the final report has been published; and THS' grading now reflects the grading that Ofsted awarded in the recent inspection. • Number of first choices: THS/LHS are currently oversubscribed which is very healthy; both schools PAN is 240, but following appeals the school/s may go over this figure. First choices at TPS has increased; their allocation is 210, but Knowsley Council have asked TPS to take an additional 30 pupils. Mr Donnelly advised that Trust has agreed in principle to take the additional pupils and Knowsley Council have agreed to fund the additional costs associated with this 'bulge class'. Mr Donnelly also noted that a large number of these children are from Kirby, and as such there is an expectation that a number of these children will not arrive in September. <p>Q: The children coming from Kirby, are they likely to be a diverse cohort? A: We expect that they may be new to the area, and might even be new to the country. Knowsley Council have assured us that we will be provided with additional support for these children. Knowsley have also talked about putting on a bus for them, so that travel to the school is not a barrier for their families.</p> <p>Q: TPS' PAN is 210 and you have spoken about this cohort increasing to 240, but the first choices is currently showing as 116 – do a lot children come to TPS who have listed them as their 3rd/4th choices? A: A lot of families are applying for places at schools within neighbouring authorities and they don't get in. Both secondary schools in Kirby are now graded Good and as a result there is more competition than previously.</p> <p>Q: If we take in a large number of children who are being allocated to TPS by the local authority, are we making ourselves vulnerable? A: Yes, we will need to do further work quite quickly to find out more about this potential cohort, ie identify challenges that the school could possibly face.</p> <p>Q: If families haven't applied, could primary schools potentially have a role to play, ie the primary school could remind families to complete forms, and/or assist/support the family if there are any barriers? A: Yes, maybe we need to remind primaries to encourage families to complete their forms</p>			
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	<p><i>Evaluating Provision Framework & Performance Data:</i> Mr Donnelly noted that the secondary performance data provided is based on evidence; and that the next data drop is due to take place on 31.03.23. Mr Donnelly also noted that Mr Yates (Principal LHS) and Mr Jardine (Exec Principal THS/TPS) will be attending the next E&S meeting.</p> <p>Trustees noted that they wanted the updated data to be shared with the full board as soon as it was available. Mr Donnelly confirmed that it will be.</p> <p>Attendance: Mr Donnelly noted that the attendance data had been updated since the last iteration of the dashboard report; and that there had only been marginal changes (positive & negative) in terms of the figures themselves. Mr Donnelly also noted that the DoTL is working with the DfE Attendance Advisor and from this work granular level data for specific groups will be obtained.</p> <p>Q: If you get under TPS' data, certain year groups' attendance is lower; what are you doing to support those year groups and the school?</p> <p>A: There is a significant group of children who are persistently absent; maybe it would be helpful for Trustees if we bring to E&S the granular data for that specific group of students. It may also be good to look at exclusions. Trustees confirmed that they would like this to happen.</p> <p>Q: Persistent absence figures are really high; Ms Black did a really brilliant presentation on PowerBi. With attendance the schools are dealing with difficult issues, but with persistent absence 1/3 of children within THF are within this category?</p> <p>A: This is what we are looking into with the DfE; also Covid and the Teachers strike action have impacted on attendance.</p> <p>Following further discussion it was agreed that Ms Black will provide granular data on attendance to E&S; the presentation will look at primary and secondary school attendance, and will include data on where schools were pre and post Covid.</p> <p>Current HR Casework: Mr Donnelly provided further detail in relation to the data provided, noting that the DoHR has completed staff absence audits at schools; and as such when a staff absence reaches a certain level it will trigger absence management procedures.</p> <p>Staffing Spend as % of income</p> <p>Q: Why is LMP's staffing costs so high, and BWP's staffing costs so low?</p> <p>A: LMP's staffing costs have been traditionally high and they have been brought down slightly; they also have a high number of SEND staff. We will need to do some work to look at bringing a more readily comparable figure to Board, ie LMP receive a significant level of high needs funding and therefore it is accepted that as a result the funding is there, and that it will be used to provide 1:1 support.</p> <p>Q: Have we got parity across the Trust in terms of salary points for Teaching Assistants?</p>	<p>EPF – updated secondary school performance data to be circulated to Trust Board</p> <p>Granular data re TPS persistent absence and exclusions to be brought to E&S</p> <p>(linked to previous action)</p>	<p>Exec Officers</p> <p>CEO/DoTL</p>	<p>As soon as the data is available</p> <p>Next E&S Meeting (27.04.23)</p>
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	<p>A: Yes, we follow NJC terms & conditions; however there are some remaining legacy disparities across the Trust that were TUPE'd over from the incumbent local authority models used prior to schools joining the Trust.</p> <p>Q: Do we need to be mindful of this as a Trust?</p> <p>A: Yes, whilst these disparities are legacy items; any new recruitments are actioned through the central team and they are consistent terms across the Trust.</p> <p>Governor Vacancies: It was noted that at the time the performance dashboard was produced LMP had not yet moved to an LGB membership of 9; the LGB have since agreed the new structure and as such the number of governor vacancies at LMP has been decreased to 3.</p> <p>Survey Data: Mr Donnelly advised that the next survey cycle will take place after Easter. Mr Donnelly noted that the PFP survey data is somewhat of an outlier, adding that a couple of issues were happening at the time the survey was sent to parents, and as such their responses show their dissatisfaction at that point in time. Mr Donnelly also explained the staff survey figure; noting that there are a couple of staff who are unhappy, and that the school is working with them in order to address these issues.</p> <p>It was also noted that in PFP social media has played its part in swaying some parents' points of view and as such it may be good to offer parents the opportunity to come into school so that they can see for themselves how the school operates.</p> <p>Q: There is a big jump in terms of the % of parents who would recommend TPS; is this as a result of higher numbers of respondents?</p> <p>A: At the time when the previous survey went out TPS had just had a big clamp down on uniform; and some parents were dissatisfied with this which resulted in the 57.8% figure.</p> <p>Q; With these surveys is there a way to pick out action items?</p> <p>A: For the surveys we use the Ofsted questionnaire; however this will only be the third survey that has been conducted using this format.</p> <p>Q: Without the measure over time, is there consistency on what is causing stakeholders to be dissatisfied?</p> <p>A: Yes, leadership at schools analyse the survey in detail; the next survey will provide us with the 3rd set of data; this should enable us to provide a measure over time. In terms of reasons for dissatisfaction, generally staff concerns are around workload, and parents' concerns are around communication; as more data becomes available we will be able to draw more conclusions.</p> <p>There being no further questions, Ms Stevenson thanked Exec Officers for their update.</p>			
<p>9. School Improvement</p>	<p>Trustees received a document entitled 'School Improvement March 2023' prior to the meeting.</p>			

	<p>Mr Donnelly reported that there had not been any further updates since the report was written. Mr Donnelly also explained that The Challenge Academy Trust (TCAT) have identified a person who can work 1 day a week with THF.</p> <p>Discussion around the report then took place (see PART II minutes for full details)</p>			
10.Risk & Reporting Update	<p>Trustees received a copy of the Trust’s current Risk Register prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly advised that following the last Board meeting he had written out to CoGs to confirm that LGBs are able to discuss any items, which are graded Red/raise concern to the LGB, outside of the meeting cycle, ie Governors do not need to wait until a particular item appears on the agenda before they can discuss it. Mr Donnelly then provided a brief summary in relation to those Risk items which had changed/were of concern.</p> <p>A4.1: following school assessment this risk item was upgraded to Green. A4.2: following school assessment this risk item was downgraded to Amber.</p> <p>Q: Are we confident that the school plan empowers their teachers? A: Partially, some areas don’t, but there are plans in place to address this.</p> <p>B1.3: following school assessment this risk item was upgraded to Blue.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly noted that no changes had been made to the overall Key Risks/Contributory Risks, 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>			
11.Trust Committee Updates	<p>Ms Stevenson noted that there were no updates received in relation to BF&A committee meetings. Mr Smith reported that the main thing that had come out of the E&S Committee discussions had been around the critical appointment of the Director of Quality & Standards.</p>			
12. AoB	<p>There were no AoB items to be discussed.</p>			
13. Date of Next Meeting	<p>The date of the next MAT Board meeting is Thursday 25th May 2023, venue: Halsnead Primary School. Ms Stevenson and Ms Williams also noted that they would plan to stay behind afterwards so that they could meet with the NLG. Ms Stevenson thanked Exec Officers and Trustees for their input/ contributions to today’s MAT Board meeting.</p>			

Meeting closed at 9.35 am

These minutes are approved as a true record of the meeting

Signed:

[H Stevenson – Chair]

Date: 25th May 2023

Chair’s initials to record approval of minutes:

Date: 25.05.23