

The Heath Family (NW) MAT
PART I - Minutes of the Trust Board meeting held on
Thursday 19th October 2023 at 8.00 am



<p><u>Trustees Present:</u> Helen Stevenson (Chair), Karl Smith, Christopher Davis, Tony Gundersen, Janine Inglis, <u>In Attendance:</u> David Donnelly (CEO), Sharon Black (DOTL), Paula Jones (DOQS), Craig Parkinson (DOO), Paula Evans (DOHR), Natalie Gilmore (CFO)</p>		<p><u>Apologies:</u> Annette Williams, Cheri Kelly <u>Non attenders:</u> None</p>		
		Clerk (TGM): Trish Roberts		
Items	Discussion	Action	Who	When
1. Election of Chair/Vice Chair of the Board	<p>Mrs Roberts advised that no written nominations for the role of Chair and Vice Chair had been received prior to the meeting. Trustees were then invited to provide nominations for the two roles. Details of nominee/ proposer/ seconder are as follows:</p> <p>Chair of the Board: Nominee: Helen Stevenson Proposed by: Tony Gundersen Seconded by: Christopher Davis</p> <p>All present agreed the nomination and there being no other nominees; RESOLVED: That Ms Helen Stevenson is duly elected as Chair of the Board.</p> <p>Vice Chair of the Board Nominee: Karl Smith Proposed by: Helen Stevenson Seconded by: Tony Gundersen</p> <p>All present agreed the nomination and there being no other nominees; RESOLVED: That Mr Karl Smith is duly elected as Vice Chair of the Board.</p>	DfE database 'Getting Information about Schools' (GIAS) to be updated within 14 days of the appointments	TGM	By 02.11.23
2. Welcome, introductions & apologies	<p>Ms Stevenson welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>At the meeting Trustees noted and accepted apologies from the following Trustee/s: Ms A Williams. Outside of the meeting Ms C Kelly advised that she had experienced personal issues which led to her being unable to attend the meeting, and as such her apologies have also been noted in the minutes.</p>			
3. Declaration of Business and Pecuniary Interests	<p>Trustees received a copy of the Trust's Register of Business Interests 2023-24 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 the agenda for this meeting.</p>			

<p>4. To receive/ ratify PT I and PT II Minutes from THFNW Board mtg held on 06.07.23</p>	<p>Trustees received an electronic copy of PART I and PART II minutes from the MAT Board meeting held on 06.07.23. 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 06.07.23 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.</p>	<p>Agreed MAT Board Minutes from 06.07.23 to be formally signed</p>	<p>Chair</p>	<p>ASAP</p>
<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 19.10.23 prior to the meeting. At the meeting Trustees raised questions and Exec Officers provided answers/updates on outstanding actions in terms of matters arising from the minutes and the action log:</p> <p>Safeguarding / PREVENT Training / KCSIE Declarations: TGM will send email reminders to any Trustee yet to complete this action. Ms Stevenson noted that Trustees will then have 7 days to complete.</p> <p>Trustee Strategy Session: Ms Stevenson noted that she will liaise with Mr Donnelly to agree a date for the next Trustee Strategy Session; which will then be circulated to all Trustees.</p>	<p>Trustee Strategy Session date to be agreed and circulated to Trustees</p>	<p>Chair / CEO / Exec Officers</p>	<p>ASAP</p>
<p>6. Trust Quality Indicators</p>	<p>Mr Donnelly explained the rationale for this agenda item; and Exec Officers provided a short presentation with regards their own area of responsibility (ie School Improvement, Operations, HR, and Finance). See PART II minutes for full details of discussion.</p>			
<p>7. Link Trustees</p>	<p>Safeguarding Lead Trustee: Ms Stevenson advised that following the recent departure of Mr Vitalis; the role of Safeguarding Lead Trustee is vacant, and as such she was enquiring as to whether there were any Trustees who would like to/have capacity to take on the role. Mr Gunderson indicated that he would happy to take on the role; there being no other nominations, Mr Gunderson was duly appointed to the role of Safeguarding Lead Trustee.</p> <p>Link Trustees: Mr Donnelly noted that the Link Trustees programme had fallen back, and now there were only 7 Trustees in post this would become more problematic. Mr Donnelly suggested therefore it was now a good opportunity to look at moving from School Link Trustees to Themed Trustees (ie SEND etc). Trustees agreed that this would be a good approach; and as such this will be picked up during the Trustee Strategy Session.</p>	<p>A move to Themed Trustees (ie SEND) to be discussed at Trustee Strategy Session</p>	<p>Trustees/ Exec Officers</p>	<p>Trustee Strategy Session (date TBA)</p>
<p>8. Policy Update</p>	<p>Trust Model Safeguarding Policy 2023-24: Trustees received a copy of the model policy with their meeting papers prior to the meeting. At the meeting, Mr Donnelly explained that he had agreed the model policy and the school-level policies for 2023-24. Mr Donnelly advised that this is as per the delegated responsibility document; and that this agenda item is so that there is a formal record that Trustees have officially received the policy. Trustees thanked Mr Donnelly.</p>			

<p>9. Chair's Action Report (to receive)</p>	<p>Trustees received an electronic copy of the Chair's Action & Governor Membership Update 19.10.23 report prior to the meeting; and content was noted at the meeting.</p> <p>Ms Stevenson thanked Mrs Roberts (TGM) for the work she had done and continues to do around Governor recruitment. Ms Stevenson also noted the importance of local governors and the work they do to support the Board; Ms Stevenson asked that the Board's thanks are also passed on to all local Governors.</p> <p>Trustee Recruitment: Mrs Roberts reported that since the Chair's Action report was circulated to Trustees, the Trust has received 2 expressions of interest for the role of Trustee; as such details will be sent to the Chair to check whether she is happy to progress to formal recruitment processes.</p> <p>Governor Vacancies: Mr Donnelly also drew attention to the increase in Governor vacancies; Mr Donnelly noted that it is not overly problematic at this point, however if Governor numbers continue to decline there may be a need to look at other governance structures (ie local area boards). Mr Donnelly assured Trustees that THF is not in that position yet, but it is essential to have a plan in place should the need arise. Trustees agreed that it is a risk to the Trust, and as such it should form part of the discussions during the Trustee Strategy day.</p> <p>Ms Stevenson thanked Exec Officers/TGM for their input and also asked the TGM to keep a watching brief and check in more regularly with the Interim CoGs as they settle into the role.</p>	<p>Governance Structure to be added to the agenda for the Trustee Strategy day</p>	<p>Exec Officers</p>	<p>ASAP (once date is agreed)</p>
<p>10. Governance Update</p>	<p>Trustees received a copy of the Governance Update report 19.10.23 prior to the meeting. At the meeting Mrs Roberts advised that there were no further updates, however there were a number of documents that required Trustees approval:</p> <p><i>Scheme of Delegation and High Level Division of Responsibility document 2023:</i> Trustees received a draft copy of the Trust's Scheme of Delegation 2023-24 (track change version) including Appendix 1 High Level Division of Responsibility document prior to the meeting. Trustees were advised that other than dates, updates re new Trustees and those who have left etc, no other changes were proposed.</p> <p>There being no comments/queries, Trustees</p> <p>RESOLVED: to approve/agree the Trust's Scheme of Delegation 2023 (incl appendices)</p> <p><i>Trustee Code of Conduct 2023:</i> Trustees received a copy of the draft Code of Conduct 2023-24 (track-change version). It was also noted that the Governor Code of Conduct document will also be updated in line with the Trustee version. There being no changes to be made, Trustees</p> <p>RESOLVED: to approve/agree the Trustee Code of Conduct 2023-24 and Governor Code of Conduct 2023-24</p>			

	<p><i>Skills Audit 2023:</i> Trustees received a copy of the current Trustee Skills Audit analysis document prior of the meeting. Exec Officers advised that it evidences that although the Trust Board is down in numbers, it still has a good depth of knowledge and skills within it. As an when new Trustees are appointed they will be asked to complete a skills audit form; and the updated analysis document will be shared with all Trustees so that they are kept up-to-date in terms of skills gaps, training needs etc.</p> <p><i>Committee Terms of Reference 2023:</i> Trustees received a copy of the draft E&S, BFA and LGB terms of reference documents for 2023-24 (tracked versions). Akin to the SoD, other than administration updates, there were no other proposed updates to be aware of. No further changes were requested, Trustees therefore</p> <p>RESOLVED: to approve/agree the E&S, BFA and LGB Terms of Reference 2023-24</p> <p><i>Trustee/Governor Safeguarding Training:</i> Trustees received a copy of the Trust’s Safeguarding & Safer Recruitment Calendar 2023-24 at the beginning of Autumn Term 2023. Mrs Roberts will keep Trustees advised on any safeguarding/safer recruitment training they are required to complete this year.</p> <p><i>DfE Documents & Updates:</i> Trustees formally received a copy of the Academy Trust Handbook 2023, and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023. In relation to KCSiE, Trustees have been asked to read the document and to confirm on GovernorHub (or via email) that they have read and understood it.</p> <p><i>Meeting Schedule 2023/24 Review:</i> Ms Stevenson advised that she would not be able to attend the MAT Board meeting set to take place on 28.03.23; and as such is happy to see if the date can be moved or for another Trustee to take on the Chair in her absence. Mrs Roberts also asked Trustees about their preference with regards the format of the meeting, ie last year Trustees agreed to go with alternate face-to-face and remote meetings. Following discussion Trustees agreed that their preference would be to go with face-to-face for all full Trust Board meetings this year.</p>			
<p>11. Performance Dashboard</p>	<p>Trustees received electronic copies of the Performance Dashboard (dated October 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"> • <i>Current Ofsted Grading:</i> Mr Donnelly advised that HPS’ Ofsted report has now been published; Mr Donnelly also spoke about the Trust’s profile in terms of Ofsted gradings. • <i>Number on Roll:</i> Mr Donnelly spoke about ‘bulge’ class that had been agreed at TPS, noting that a considerable amount of the additional children that had been assigned to join TPS did not arrive in September. However, as per the agreement, TPS will be allowed to keep the additional funding that was agreed for the ‘bulge’ class. • <i>Pupil Stability:</i> Mr Donnelly advised that this data will be available last in Autumn term 2023. • <i>% Pupil Premium / SEN / EAL:</i> Mr Donnelly reported that figures are largely static, ie THF has a high level of SEND pupils and a low level of EAL pupils. 			

Q: In terms of student numbers, are there any indicators, ie footfall during open evenings etc?
A: School open evenings have been well attended; LHS had two open days with Y5 being invited to attend. TPS also received a good turnout; however the issue at TPS is around the number of first choices; it has been low year on year, with a large number of children not indicating a preference at all. Pupil numbers at TPS are increasing; and it is hoped that their numbers may increase further with the new housing estate being built quite close by. Mr Parkinson also provided up-to-date pupil numbers in relation to both the Trust as a whole and broken down by school. Mr Donnelly also spoke about issues that affect school numbers, ie some of our schools have a large number of traveller families who remove their children from education for a period of time however schools are aware that these families will return later in the year. This can impact budgets as these pupils may not be on roll when the school census occurs; and if the children are not registered, they are not in the system.

Q: Are all primary school NoR down?
A: Yes, pupil numbers are falling within primary sector nationally; the bulge is currently within the secondary sector. At HPS we currently have a 2 form entry, we are targeting the new housing development and we would hope to see an increase in pupil numbers; however if this doesn't happen we will need to look at decreasing the PAN. Mr Donnelly noted that if we did drop the PAN, Knowsley may raise concern considering the new housing development that has been built. Further discussion followed; and it was also noted that the new Director of Education for Knowsley is due to take up post in January 2024.

Evaluating Provision Framework & Performance Data:

Mr Donnelly explained that the EPF data was as of the end of last year, and that next data drop is due on 20.10.23.

Performance Data: Mr Donnelly noted that the data was last updated in Aug 2023 and it had been discussed at E&S at their meeting in September 2023; overall there was circa. 10% improvement in Basic Standard 4+ compared to 2019, however one secondary school remains stubbornly low. Mr Donnelly also noted that primary standards were above national which is a significant improvement.

Attendance: Mr Donnelly advised that overall attendance YTD is currently 91.6%; and that primary attendance figures are higher than secondary, with TPS' attendance improving but still lower than other schools within the Trust.

Q: Does TPS' bulge class impact their attendance figures, if children are on roll, but never arrived at the school?

A: Yes, if you remove that particular cohort from TPS' attendance figures you can see a clear improvement.

Mr Donnelly also advised that there is further narrative around outcomes within the TQI Headlines (see TQI documents & presentation (PART II – agenda item 6).

	<p><i>Fixed Term/Permanent Exclusions:</i> Mr Donnelly noted that the number of exclusions are lessening across the Trust; and that the next iteration of data will be available soon. Mr Donnelly also drew attention to TPS' exclusion data, noting that there had been a 50% reduction which is a big improvement.</p> <p><i>Q: THS has the highest number of permanent exclusions; are there any particular reasons for this?</i> <i>A: I can't remember off hand, but we will be able drill down into the data and get the information to you. Trustees noted that it would be helpful to see this detail as it will help them to see that policy is being followed.</i></p> <p>General discussion followed; whereby it was agreed that it may be helpful for an E&S meeting to have a specific focus on Managed Moves/Suspensions/Exclusions. It was also noted that a school within one of the LA's linked to THF have stated that they will not be taking any pupils on roll under these circumstances due to the school being at 'functional capacity'. Mr Donnelly explained that he had not heard of this as a reason for stopping a child joining a school, adding that Managed Moves only work if everyone is playing by the same rules. Mr Donnelly advised that he has written to the LA to ask about this, and he will update Trustees on their response. Mr Donnelly also noted that schools will have more exclusions, if Managed Moves fall by the wayside. Further discussion followed.</p> <p><i>Q: Do schools meet regularly to discuss Managed Moves?</i> <i>A: Yes, each LA has a panel; but some schools take more students than others. Mr Donnelly explained that THS is full but they still take children in on Managed Moves; however this is not the same at all schools.</i></p> <p><i>Q: For Permanent Exclusions, is this coming out within Trust tolerances/national expectations?</i> <i>A: Yes, but it would be good to look more in-depth at this within E&S</i></p> <p><i>Budget data:</i> Mr Donnelly advised that the Trust's budget is looking healthy, and then asked the CFO to provide a brief update. Ms Gilmore reported that the first period to date is slightly ahead of projection; and currently the budget is looking at a £279k surplus for the year which is £65k favourable to budget; contingency has also been built in to the budget for this year and discussions are taking place with regards the handling of reserves. Mr Gundersen also noted that discussions had also taken place around primaries and working out how to support them, ie it takes very little to destabilise their budgets. Mr Gundersen also spoke about setting a strategy which can cover risks in the medium/long term.</p> <p><i>Survey Data:</i> Mr Donnelly noted that due to the low number of respondents discussions have taken place to agree a mechanism whereby more staff respond. Mr Donnelly advised that the Staff Survey is due to go out after Christmas, and that school leaders will be asked to provide time to staff so that they can complete.</p> <p>There being no further questions, Ms Stevenson thanked Exec Officers for their updates.</p>	<p>Report ref reasons for Perm Excl to be provided to Board</p> <p>E&S to look at perm exclusions more in-depth</p>	<p>Exec Leaders</p> <p>Trustees/Exec Leaders</p>	<p>Next meeting (07.12.23)</p> <p>Next E&S meeting (25.01.24)</p>
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<p>12. Risk & Reporting Update</p>	<p>Trustees received a copy of the Trust’s Autumn Term 1 Risk Assessment Overview document prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly provided a brief summary in relation to the details provided: the document has been produced now that LGBs have completed their first cycle of meetings (taking them up to October half term). Safeguarding will an area of focus at all meetings, and for this half term LGBs have also focussed on Vision & Values, Outcomes and Governance. Mr Donnelly then drew attention to key areas that the Board needed to be aware of:</p> <p><i>Vision & Values:</i> BWP and DPS have graded this Amber, as vision/values are not fully embedded. Mr Donnelly then went on to provide further details that have led to the grading.</p> <p><i>Outcomes:</i> THS have graded themselves Blue, although given that they are not currently at national it is felt that the grading should be lower. Trustees noted that the grading of this focus area needed to be checked out, ie if schools are below national, the expectation would be that the grading would be at the highest Amber.</p> <p>Ms Jones noted that she has been tasked to do this moderation; adding that there needs to be real confidence that everyone is following the same criteria. Ms Jones noted that has a meeting with the Principal at LHS today, and this will be something she will be picking up on.</p> <p><i>Governance (Skills & Expertise):</i> a number of schools have graded themselves as Amber; LGBs have the appropriate level of skills currently, but the grading is as a result of the number of vacancies they currently have. Mr Donnelly then went on to speak about the difficulties around recruiting governors, noting that LGBs will also be identifying any skills gaps and trying to recruit to close these gaps as much as possible.</p> <p>Trustees thanked Exec Officers for their presentation/input noting that the proposed changes to the format made complete sense and as such they were happy to endorse.</p>			
<p>13. Trust Committee Update</p>	<p>Education & Standards Committee: Mr Smith noted that as results are now higher than they were in 2019 Ofqual have stated that everything will be back to normal for Summer Exams 2024. At the last E&S meeting, Trustees were provided with presentations from School Exec Leaders, whereby they provided contextual information that sits behind the results. In the main, the results showed significant improvement for primaries and some improvement across the secondaries, which evidences that they are closing the gaps). Mr Smith also noted that the committee had been provided with contextual information around SEND, Disadvantaged and attendance/p.a. (persistent absence). Mr Smith noted that the narrative that seemed to run through all presentations was around trying to achieve consistency; and destination data was also discussed, ie we need as a Trust to look at where our young people move on to. Mr Smith also explained that all School Exec Leaders had presented their school’s data; and it was pleasing to see that there is progress being made.</p>			
	<p>Business, Finance & Audit Committee: Ms Stevenson explained that Mr Gundersen had been appointed as Interim chair for last week’s BFA meeting; and also advised that she would wish to propose Mr Gundersen to</p>			

	<p>take on the role going forwards. There being no objections, the appointment was approved. Ms Stevenson then asked Mr Gundersen to provide a brief verbal summary report on behalf of the BFA committee.</p> <p>Mr Gundersen noted that the information provided to BFA showed that the Trust is in a financially strong position. Mr Gundersen also thanked Ms Gilmore for the papers provided; noting that they were set out in a way that was easy to understand; which very much supported the committee whilst in this transition period. Mr Gundersen also provided details around the discussions that had taken place around Reserves. Mr Gundersen also noted that the papers included a well set out balance sheet and document that sits behind it, which enabled the finance update to flow easily. Ms Inglis concurred with this, stating that she had been a little nervous, but the papers Ms Gilmore had provided had made her feel comfortable; which had led to some good discussions around investment. It was also noted that Mr Davis had joined the committee at last week's meeting, and that he is looking to continue for future meetings.</p> <p>Ms Stevenson also asked that it be recorded; that she would want to thank Mr Vitalis for his many years of service to the Trust Board. Since the meeting, a letter of thanks has also been sent to Mr Vitalis on behalf of the Board.</p>			
14. AoB	<p>Cyber Security Risk: Ms Inglis noted that this item needed to be picked back up again this year. All agreed</p> <p>STCPD: Mr Parkinson advised that the STCPD document for 2023-24 has now been published, and as such he would propose that cost of living rises included within it are fully implemented. Mr Parkinson assured Trustees that the salary increases with the STCPD 2023-24 have been costed into the Trust's budget. Mr Parkinson then asked if Trustees were happy to approve. Trustees</p> <p>RESOLVED: that the STCPD 2023-24 document is accepted and as such is fully implemented for 2023/24.</p>	Cyber Security to be added to a future BFA agenda	Exec Leaders	Next full BF&A meeting
15. Date of Next Meeting	Trustees noted that the date of the next Board meeting is Thursday 7 th December 2023, 8.00 am. It was also noted that the venue of the meeting will need to change, due to the room being needed for the Trust's Safer Recruitment training. As soon as a venue is agreed details will be circulated to Trustees.	Identify a new venue for MAT Board 07.12.23	Exec Officers/ TGM	ASAP

Meeting closed at 10.00 am

These minutes are approved as a true record of the meeting

Signed:

[H Stevenson – Chair]

Date: 7th December 2023