

East Midlands Academy Trust - Board Meeting

Pyramus House, Roman Way, Grange Park, Northampton NN4 5EA – **Hybrid meeting**

Friday 29th April 2022 at 10:00am

Third meeting of academic year 2021/2022

These minutes reflect the order of the agenda and not necessarily the order in which items were discussed.

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action
1. Welcome	<p>Present:</p> <p>Kevin Crompton (EMAT: Trustee) – Chair ☎</p> <p>Leigh Jones (EMAT: Trustee) ☎ <i>Joined at 10:17am/left at 12.33pm</i></p> <p>Ayo Salam (EMAT: Trustee) ☎ <i>left at 12.00pm</i></p> <p>Fiona Wheeler (EMAT: Trustee)</p> <p>Stephen Morales (EMAT: Trustee) ☎</p> <p>David Houghton (EMAT: Trustee) ☎</p> <p>Joshua Coleman (EMAT: CEO)</p> <p>Paul Wheeler (EMAT: COO)</p> <p>Lorna Beard (EMAT: Head of Inclusion & Training Hub) <i>left at 12.11pm</i></p> <p>John Lawson (EMAT: Head of Education)</p> <p>Monica Juan (EMAT: Head of Governance & Compliance) - Minutes</p> <p>Observing:</p> <p>Nick Bell (potential trustees) ☎</p> <p>Kate Joiner – (NGA: NLG) ☎</p> <p>The chair welcomed all and reminded all present that the matters raised within this meeting would remain confidential until the minutes were agreed and signed off.</p> <p>Nick Bell and Kate joiner introduced themselves. NB had been invited to observe as part of the trustee's recruitment process and KJ was observing the meeting as part of the ERG currently underway.</p>	
2. Apologies	Apologies from Andy Davis were received and accepted by the board.	
3. Quoracy	The meeting was confirmed as quorate.	
4. Declarations of Interest	<p>There were no declarations of interest pertaining to this agenda in addition to those already recorded on the annual Register of Interests.</p> <p>NB had signed a NDA.</p>	
5. Minutes of EMAT TB meeting held on 13.12.2021 & confidential min.	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on the 13.12.2021, including confidential minutes, were reviewed and agreed to be an accurate representation of the meetings.</p> <p>KC agreed to physically sign the minutes at the next face to face meeting.</p>	

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6. Action Log from 13.12.2021	All actions from the previous meeting had been completed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resend trustees school allocation contact details • Review Appraisal Policy/Process • Upload policies to website 	
7. NIA Update	<p><i>Papers had been distributed with the agenda for this meeting</i></p> <p>JC informed trustees that the TWN response had been sent and the Action Plan had been submitted. Ofsted had agreed with the plan proposed and suggested some additions which had been duly added.</p> <p>JC explained that the current HT was seeking leave from the organisation. JT would remain in post until end of August and recruitment for a new Executive Head will commence. In the meantime, a new Executive Leader had been appointed, FC, to add capacity and support to the NIA team, embedding the change of culture and improvement in behaviour. The leadership structure had also been adjusted accordingly and the expectations around staff accountability had been increased.</p> <p>In response to a question from a trustee regarding whether the NIA stakeholders had been informed about the changes JC confirmed that all changes had been promptly communicated to parents/carers, students, and staff. In addition, a set of surveys had been deployed to seek the stakeholder views after the Ofsted inspection.</p> <p>JL presented the NIA Action Plan and ran through the priorities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. pupils' behaviour, conduct and attitudes improve so that all pupils are ready to learn, behave safely and show respect for all 2. for all subjects and in all year groups there is a well-planned and sequenced curriculum from the Early Years to the 6th Form, which is taught consistently well and enables all pupils, including those with SEND, to achieve well 3. reading is taught consistently well so that all pupils, including those with SEND, can read fluently and have the comprehension skills they need and develop a love of reading 4. we improve our school culture by more effectively promoting pupils' personal development, increase pupils' aspiration, understanding of how to keep themselves safe and respect others who may be different to themselves 5. our systems for recording, communicating, and improving attendance are fully effective and help keep pupils safe 6. leadership is more effective at all levels, including governance, in driving and bringing about sustained improvement. <p>JL confirmed that there was a vast amount of work to be done to address the perception of stakeholders and the organisational culture needed to change.</p>	

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	<p>The <i>Tom Bennet report</i> was presented to trustees. JL stated that the expectations of staff needed to shift, and more consistency was required dealing with procedures to improve behaviour. However, the overall report had not identified signs of high-level misbehaviour. The issues noted were relatively low level and non-persistent, with the worst behaviour noted being apathy or lack of effort.</p> <p>Training around behaviour management had been put in place for staff to address the issues identified in the report and some progress had been noted already, particularly around number of suspensions/exclusions and late attendance. The new break arrangements and 100 minutes lessons had greatly minimised the disruption to learning.</p> <p>Prospect had been temporarily closed with the students being placed in alternative provision (AP) for the following six weeks. This had significantly stabilised the atmosphere in the building. Action plans had been put in place for those students, with some of them returning after the AP period to the main school. LB confirmed that some of those students would not be returning to the NIA as there would not be adequate provision to support them.</p> <p>JL stressed the importance to maintain a positive relationship with the Local Authority. They had been very supportive and had agreed to conduct an assurance safeguarding visit to the NIA. This would take place on 27th May.</p> <p>In response to a question from a trustee regarding how trustees could know whether learning was effective in the NIA JL clarified that following the inspection, changes had been introduced to strengthen the delivery of the curriculum and monitoring milestones had been incorporated to the action plan. Strategy meetings were taking place weekly with the NIA where curriculum was discussed alongside behaviour and safeguarding. Accountability within staff was one of the main issues and work was being done to repair this. HoD had been instructed to regularly check how their teachers were managing behaviour in the classroom.</p> <p>JC reminded trustees that during the extraordinary meeting that had been called after the Ofsted inspection, the board had agreed for an extra £250K investment to be deployed at the NIA. Some of it had been utilised to bolster effective learning. A new safeguarding team (Thompson Team) had been employed to support the safeguarding arrangements within the school.</p> <p>Trustees discussed at length the NIA challenges and questioned whether some signs might had been missed by the board. Trustees expressed their disappointment around the lack of staff engagement, particularly after new strengthened whistleblowing arrangements that had been implemented across the organisation.</p> <p>JC informed trustees that a consultant had been engaged to conduct a psychoanalytic exercise with the NIA staff, to allow them to voice their</p>	<p>Present updated RAG NIA plan during next meeting</p>

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	<p>concerns in a safe space. A workshop would follow to identify ways to better embed responsibility and engage with staff in a meaningful manner</p> <p>Trustees recognised that, although issues had been regularly flagged and safeguarding procedures were robust, the Ofsted inspection had uncovered the stakeholder's perception which was different from the apparent reality. Trustees were keen for the lessons learnt at the NIA to be cascaded to the other schools in EMAT to avoid similar scenarios, particularly around regular communication with stakeholders.</p> <p>Trustees reiterated their confidence in the executive. and concurred that they had been kept informed regularly. However, even though the current information mechanisms were the right ones, with operational responsibility discharged to the CEO and strategic escalation going to the Chair of the Board, if necessary, trustees approved to be contacted more often if the executive needed support. It was agreed that <i>URGENT ACTION REQUIRED</i> would be added to any communication if immediate intervention by trustees was necessary.</p> <p>Trustees thanked JC, JL and LB for their report.</p>	<p>Prepare a programme of rolling surveys across the trust.</p> <p>Amend method to contact trustees urgently</p>
<p>8. Updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S&P • FHRE • A&R 	<p><i>Committee chairs provided a verbal update from the last meeting:</i></p> <p>S&P: LJ explained that the committee had discussed the NIA Ofsted update and received a very informative KS4/5 Mocks report updated. Phonics had been discussed and Orchard and Shepherdswell had been invited to share with trustees the support they received from the School Improvement Team.</p> <p>FHRE: In the absence of AD, PW reported that the January accounts and reforecast had been presented to the committee. These were as expected. The committee had also received an update on the deployment of the NIA £250K extra investment as well as the ongoing SEND projects in HAR and CASTLE.</p> <p>A&R: AS reported that the safeguarding internal audit had been presented to the committee, with very minor points to action. DU had presented the new Risk Register and improved framework. The DRFT Risk Policy had been discussed and suggestion from trustees would be incorporated the final document to be presented a the following meeting.</p>	
<p>9. CEO Report</p>	<p><i>The CEO report had been distributed with the agenda for this meeting.</i></p> <p>JC presented the highlights of the document and informed trustees about the Development Day taking place in June to create a trust strategy plan based on the findings collated during the Trust wide Strategy event.</p> <p>Trustees discussed at length recruitment in the trust and whether the process was as agile as it should be. JC informed that HR was working hard to fill all vacancies across the trust and recruitment fairs had been planned for the following month to bolster staffing.</p>	

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	<p>In response to a question from a trustee regarding whether 32 leavers were a normal number JC explained that the numbers were not unique across the sector. Only 12 exit questionnaires had been collated as this was not compulsory with a high number of teachers leaving the profession altogether after the pandemic.</p> <p>Trustees thanked the CEO for the comprehensive report and requested whether a more succinct way to present the information in a front page could be introduced.</p>	<p>Infographic to be included in the report,</p>
<p>10. EMAT Safeguarding update</p>	<p><i>LB reported verbally to trustees.</i></p> <p>LB informed trustees that all safeguarding audits had been completed on time as per the annual schedule, with Orchard being booked for the summer term. There were some concerns around behaviour at Orchard, these were being closely monitored by the Head and DSL. Exec Head ZM had been deployed to provide further support. A graph was presented, showing a comparison table of safeguarding incidents across the trust. LB pointed out that the reason for the NIA having the higher amount was a combination of crackdown on safeguarding and higher number of children compared to other schools in the trust.</p> <p>Standardised DSL training across the trust had been introduced to reinforce QA and formalised supervision for DSLs was being rolled out, with LB conducting individual meetings with all of them. An extra feature, <i>CONFIDE</i>, had been added to MyConcern for HTs to record low level concerns in a more formalised way. This would also be monitored by HR.</p> <p>Following the Safeguarding internal audit report findings JL tabled the new Safeguarding report template for consideration. Trustees agreed to look at it and send any comments to MJ.</p> <p>FW reported that she had conducted a Safeguarding visit to the NIA and noted a much calmer environment, with SLT presence very visible.</p>	<p>Trustees to send report comments to MJ</p>
<p>11. Finance update</p>	<p><i>PW gave a verbal update to trustees.</i></p> <p>PW reported a £165K surplus. PW explained that there was a discrepancy with the NIA tutoring income which had exceeded the original commission. This was being investigated and the legal department were involved.</p> <p>Due to the ongoing rise of inflation, finance had asked all schools to place their resources orders earlier to make collective savings and avoid higher prices, as the costs could be deferred to the following year. Energy costs were fixed until June 2023, but procurement had started investigating how to secure competitive tariffs beyond that.</p> <p>Capital projects across the trust were ongoing with two new potential SEND units developed at HAR and CASTLE. The PWS final phase was out to tender,</p>	

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	<p>with higher inflation in building materials likely to affect the final budget. FHRE would be fully briefed at the next meeting.</p> <p>Trustees thanked PW for his report</p>	
<p>12. Trust Growth update</p>	<p>JC reported that The Willows, a school in MK near Orchard & Shepherdswell was still interested in joining the trust. They had agreed to 'Try before you Buy' and a SLA had been agreed with them providing support around HR and Payroll.</p> <p>In response to a question from a trustee regarding whether EMAT had the capacity to currently support other schools JC confirmed that the support provided to The Willows would be light touch and would commence in September 2022. Supporting other schools would portray the trust as a strong partner which would be beneficial in any dealings with the LA moving forward.</p>	
<p>13. Governance update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board membership: • White and Green paper summary • External Review of Governance • CST trustee program review 	<p><i>Papers had been distributed with the agenda for this meeting.</i></p> <p>Trustee appointments: AS, SM and FW agreed to be reappointed for a new 4-year term.</p> <p>White & Green papers: A discussion took place around both papers with trustees agreeing that the direction of travel for academies had been clearly establish in the new WP. Trustees were aware of the need for small trusts to demonstrate its viability and effectiveness and agree to pursue a more collaborative approach working with other trusts.</p> <p>ERG: KJ explained the methodology of the process, what would be the expected outcome and timeline of events. The report was expected to be finalised before the summer term.</p> <p>CST programme: Trustees that had completed the CST programme agree to forward their views to the Head of Governance which would be collated at the next CEO report.</p> <p>With Covid19 restrictions lifted, Trustees discussed how meetings should be conducted moving forward and agree to adopt a bended approach (face to face/virtually) to ensure quoracy. This should be reflected in the Terms of Reference.</p>	<p>MJ to update records</p> <p>Trustees to meet separately to discuss WP/GP</p> <p>Trustee to send comments</p> <p>Change ToR</p>
<p>14. Policies for ratification:</p>	<p><i>All policies had been distributed with the agenda for this meeting</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMAT Admissions Policy 2023/2024 (information only) • EMAT Whistleblowing 2022/2023 (information only) • EMAT Gift Policy 2022/2024 (for ratification) • Acceptable Usage policy 2022/2023 (for ratification) <p>Trustees unanimously agreed to ratify all polices</p>	<p>MJ upload policies to all EMAT websites.</p>

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15. Next Agenda items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard Items • ERG 	
16. AOB	There were no AOB	
17. Dates of next meetings	Dates of meetings 2021/2022: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wednesday 20th July 2022 @10am 	Calendar appointments have been sent

Meeting closed at 12.45pm

Signed by Kevin Crompton, Chair of Trustees

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Date.....

East Midlands Academy Trust

Action Log of the Trust Board meeting held on 29.04.2022

Item	Action	Owner
1.	Present updated RAG NIA plan during next TB meeting	JL
2.	Prepare a programme of rolling surveys across the trust	MJ
3.	Amend method to contact trustees in the event of an emergency	MJ/CN
4.	Infographic to be included in the CEO report	MJ/CN
5.	Trustees to send Safeguarding report comments to MJ	ALL/MJ
6.	Update trustees' reappointment records	MJ
7.	Trustees to send CST programme comments	ALL/MJ
8.	Trustees to meet separately to discuss WP/GP – MJ to send dates	ALL
9.	Change ToR to reflect blended meetings	MJ
10.	Upload policies to all EMAT websites	MJ