

East Midlands Academy Trust Full Board Meeting

Wednesday 1st November 2023, 4pm
 Pyramus House, Roman Way, Grange Park, Northampton, NN4 5EA
 Third Trust Board meeting of 2023-2024

MINUTES

These minutes reflect the order of the discussion, not necessarily the order of the agenda

Attendance		
Role	Name	Present
Trustee	Kevin Crompton (Chair) ☎️ (dep 5.05pm)	P
Trustee	Kate Whittlesey ☎️ (arr 4.30pm)	P
Trustee	Fiona Wheeler	P
Trustee	Leigh Jones	A
Trustee	Martin Conlon ☎️	P
Trustee	Stephen Morales	P
Observer / Potential trustee	Roheel Ahmad ☎️	P
	In Attendance	
Chief Executive Officer	Joshua Coleman	P
Chief Finance Officer	Paul Wheeler	P
Director of Education	John Lawson	P
Head of Governance & Compliance / Minutes	Alexandra Rigler	P
Director Thompson Team	Rebecca Thompson ☎️ (present only for agenda item 8)	P
P=Present A=Apologies x = Absent		

Agenda item	Discussion	Action
1. Welcome and introductions	KC welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded all that the matters discussed during the meeting should remain confidential until such time as the minutes were approved.	
2. Apologies	Apologies received and accepted from Leigh Jones .	
3. Quorum	AR advised that the meeting was quorate.	
4. Declarations of interest	There were no declarations of interest pertaining to this agenda that had not already been declared on the Register of Interests.	
5. Minutes of EMAT Trust Board meetings held on 25/09/2023 & 18/10/2023 matters arising not appearing on the Action Log	The minutes of the meetings held on 25.09.2023 & 18.10.2023 had been distributed with the agenda and papers for the meeting and were agreed by all present to be a true representation of the meeting that took place.	
6. Action Log from the meeting on 25.09.23 & 18.10.23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. AR and KC to work on a succession plan. Trustee recruitment in progress. ii. RT to complete the Mental Health Policy so it's ready for September. Complete. Attached for approval. iii. An item to be added to strategy day agenda for an update on the support being given to Orchard and is it enough. Complete. To be discussed within TIP item 7. 	i. AR

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	<p>iv. An item to be added to strategy day agenda for an update on the strategies in place to ensure there is rapid improvement in the KS2 results for 2024. Complete. To be discussed within TIP item 7.</p> <p>v. AR to complete a review late 2023, early 2024 regarding the changes to the FHRE and A&R committee. Ongoing.</p> <p>vi. JL to give an overview of the coaching model at a future meeting. Completed at strategy day 18.10.2023.</p> <p>vii. SEND report once secondary school data has been added to be an agenda item at a future meeting. Ongoing.</p> <p>viii. RT to arrange for the annual safeguarding report to be shared with all stakeholders by the end of the September. Complete.</p> <p>ix. RT to add the number of new MASH referrals to future reports. Complete.</p> <p>x. RT to add narrative were appropriate to future safeguarding reports to help the trustees understand the context of the data being shared with them. To be included at next S&P focussed meeting.</p> <p>xi. AR to speak to SM regarding a preferred lead area. Ongoing.</p> <p>xii. AR to manage the position of Chair and Vice-Chair for the A&R and FHRE committees and report back once finalised. Ongoing.</p> <p>xiii. AR to speak to MC and JS regarding school allocation and report back. Ongoing.</p>	<p>ii. AR</p> <p>iii. AR</p> <p>iv. TT</p> <p>v. AR</p> <p>vi. AR</p> <p>vii. AR</p>
<p>7. Trust Improvement Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trust Attainment Data 	<p>JC referred to the Trust Improvement plan (TIP) circulated prior to the meeting. He advised that work on codifying the document was ongoing.</p> <p>JC advised that the DfE Regional Directors team had requested a meeting on 30th Jan 2024, to include PW, KC and JC. These meetings happen annually. He explained that the TIP would be used to show the Trust's progress against the DfE quality trust descriptors.</p> <p>JC gave an update on the exceptions to the TIP as follows:</p> <p>Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The board is strong and continues to develop with 5 new trustees at various stages of application or onboarding. <p>Human Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ruhena Mahmood, Senior HR Business Partner leaves the Trust on Friday and Vicky Donnelly will join as Head of People and Culture on December 4th. <p>PW added the HR department had been reconfigured to become more process driven and will focus upon training managers to develop their own skills. This is expected to reduce staff turnover and increase staff satisfaction. A full team will be in place by December, allowing a further focus on implementing changes to terms and conditions that will differentiate the Trust and attract more talent.</p> <p>JC requested that RA meet with the new HR team to support the process of developing an attractive offer. Action: AR to arrange meeting with RA and HR team to discuss staff terms and conditions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A meeting re joint venture with Realise Me on 12.12.2023 is planned and will explore staff recruitment and agency opportunities for the Trust. <p>A Trustee referred to the short period, where the trust would operate without a substantial HR team in place.</p>	<p>viii. AR</p>

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	<p>PW advised that qualified external support was in place and would continue over this interim period.</p> <p>A Trustee asked whether staff retention had been identified as being a KPI for success.</p> <p>PW advised that it had and that the impact of staff turnover on teaching and learning had been a trigger for change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A disproportionate amount of time is invested to train new staff. If we retained staff exceptional progress could be made across the trust if staff retention was improved. <p>A Trustee asked whether there was a planned overlap of consultants and new starters within the HR team.</p> <p>PW confirmed this would be the case and that the consultants would be retained on a part time basis for the purposes of a strong handover and that Vicky Donnelly was in touch with the Trust one day per week in advance of her start date.</p> <p>A Trustee asked whether the consultants notice periods had been considered.</p> <p>PW confirmed that they had.</p> <p>A Trustee requested that key metrics around retention, absence etc be implemented in order to judge the success of the reorganised HR department.</p> <p>Orchard Academy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ruth Ryan is in place as Executive Head and Hannah Auger is a strong Deputy Headteacher. • An interim Ofsted visit suggested that the judgement of Good may not have been retained had it been a graded visit. The trust is strongly encouraging collaboration between Orchard and Shepherdswell academies ahead of the next inspection which is expected within a year. • Staffing is proving a challenge. Staff not performing to the required standard are leaving but the school has found it difficult to recruit new talent. • Work is taking place to improve on last year's outcomes with trusted interventions commencing much earlier. Phonics and writing are key priorities and support from Ruth Baker-Leask (RBL) is in place. <p>A Trustee asked why RBL's services had been retained despite an apparent lack of impact at Orchard Academy and NIA.</p> <p>JL advised that RBL was a nationally recognised Education Consultant and that lack of impact was the result of quality of teaching at the academies. RBL is now working directly with teachers in the classroom at Orchard and NIA.</p> <p>A Trustee requested that the partnership be reconsidered if impact is not seen by the end of the autumn term. Action: JL to review impact of Ruth Baker-Leask's interventions at end of autumn term.</p> <p>JL advised as Orchard did not currently have the capacity, staff from other schools were being used to mentor Early Career Teachers (ECT) within the school.</p> <p>Northampton International Academy</p>	ix. JL

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguarding audit and curriculum audit have taken place and show positive outcomes and no areas of real concern. Outcomes reflect the increased capacity for improvement. Tracking of behaviour is improved and pupils and staff are saying overall behaviour is also much improved. Suggestion that Safeguarding lead also attends inter team meetings where possible. <p>A Trustee reported that she had attended the safeguarding audit and that pupils had been quick to voice that they felt safe.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NIA continues to work on its PSHE curriculum, in particular the understanding of diversity and British values. <p>PW added that a former Headteacher had been providing support around cultural inclusion at NIA including reference to her own African heritage.</p> <p>A Trustee sought clarity on how pupils perceived safety at school.</p> <p>JC explained that previously, pupils had not felt that adults were fully in control of the school and that instances of fighting had left them feeling physically unsafe. LGBTQ+ pupils had not felt understood and those not hailing from a white working class heritage, felt unrecognised. He stressed that pupils now had a stronger understanding of British values and had confidence in the staff team in place.</p> <p>A Trustee summarised improvements as pupils feeling better understood and protagonists now understanding the consequences of their behaviour.</p> <p>JL confirmed that the Behaviour Policy was now fully understood by all pupils and staff.</p> <p>A Trustee referred to his work pertaining to his fellowship on EDI. He was invited to the NIA to talk to children and staff.</p> <p>A Trustee shared her monitoring observations that pupils now had the confidence to share concerns with adults in the knowledge that they would be dealt with.</p> <p>A Trustee noted the exclusions that had taken place at NIA and asked whether pupils considered this a reflection that the school was no longer tolerating poor behaviour.</p> <p>JL confirmed that the exclusions were as a result of the school applying its Behaviour Policy effectively.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The curriculum review shows NIA improving in all aspects. There is a shared vision which staff have collaborated upon to establish. There is a need to work on consistency but approaches are taking hold and it is apparent that the school has the capacity to implement and embed. Planned curriculum is now being taught and focus is on pedagogy. Staff retention will support this. New English curriculum leads will have significant impact. Significant improvements in behaviour, with very little low level behaviour now in evidence. A focus on teaching and learning will now address the passive compliance that has been observed. Systems and leadership are in place to enable this to happen. 	

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	<p>JC advised Trustees that the Headteacher of Prince William School (PWS) had given notice of her plan to retire in August 2024. Work has already commenced to develop a search criteria, in partnership with the consultants previously used for the substantive Headship at NIA.</p> <p>A Trustee asked when the spaces affected by RAAC may be opened again.</p> <p>PW advised that the school could continue operating as it was for the remainder of the academic year but that an increase in Y12 students would require a solution for next year. Much consideration is being given to how capacity can be added for September 2024 as any solution involving the space affected would not be in place until 2026 at the earliest.</p> <p>Trustees acknowledged that the current situation around capacity would need to be managed for some time.</p>	
8. Safeguarding Update	<p>RT referred to the Safeguarding report circulated prior to the meeting. She explained that the key priorities for safeguarding had been revisited following the Trust Strategy Day and reviewed in line with Trust's overarching priorities of Educational Excellence and Operation Excellence. She reminded Trustees of the significant difference in outcomes for those young people who have a social worker / social care referral and that there were children within the Trust that fell under all three SEND, PP and Social worker categories.</p> <p>RT identified four broad priority areas requiring focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective use of standards and performance data • Development of the collaborative approach within the Trust • The effective use of trust wide systems to support safeguarding • The embedding of quality assurance systems <p>JL expressed his support for the objectives RT had identified and suggested that they develop a safeguarding strategic planner in partnership. He acknowledged that safeguarding practice within school was already strong and that any additional plan must be aligned with existing audits and training as well as being realistic and achievable. Action: JL and RT to develop Safeguarding strategic planner.</p> <p>RT highlighted the safeguarding related policies that had been reviewed, the staff training that had taken place and the filtering and monitoring systems that were in place to reflect KCSIE updates.</p> <p>RT advised that the Mental Health working party had met and commenced working on developing website content, a view of how positive mental health of all Trust stakeholders should be maintained and a schedule of staff training and awareness.</p>	x. JL / TT
9. Cleaning Contract Procurement Recommendation:	<p>Trustees acknowledged the Chairs Action taken to approve the cleaning contract recommendation at the meeting 2 (18.10.2023).</p> <p>PW reported that a robust tendering process first time around did not identify a suitable partner but that a second round with Litmus Tender Management Systems identified Purgo Supply Services as the preferred tender. He referred Trustees to the award report detailing the scoring and process involved and drew attention to the attractive pricing, emphasis on innovation (robotics), thorough methodologies and willingness to brand as an EMAT team.</p>	

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	<p>A Trustee queried the total value of the contract. PW advised it totalled £2.2 million over 3 years.</p> <p>A Trustee noted that the tender scoring process clearly identified those companies that should be considered.</p> <p>Trustees unanimously approved the recommendation to award the contract, ratifying the previous Chair's action.</p>	
10. Prince William Construction Project	<p>PW referred to the Prince William School (PWS) sports hall construction project. He explained that challenges had been encountered because of inflation in construction costs and shortfalls in funding which had necessitated the Board previously approving a contribution from reserves.</p> <p>He advised that the standard design and build contract was now complete and ready for approval and identified key elements to note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once signed, the contract ensure all related risks from now on would pass to the contractor, with the exception of those relating to ground works or existing buildings. • Outside of price agreed, 2 or 3 small variations exist in relation to asbestos removal, totalling approximately £20k. <p>Trustees acknowledged that the PWS construction contract had been previously discussed at FHRE committee, had no further questions and were in approval. There was unanimous agreement that those Trustees present (FW & SM) should sign the contract.</p>	
11. Inset Day approval.	<p>The Chair referred to the additional Inset days requested by NIA, Shepherdswell and Orchard academies and requested further context.</p> <p>JC advised that NIA would be resetting its Teaching & Learning and Coaching strategy, teaching groups and RSE strategy on 5th December. He explained that as Ofsted were expected in January, this would be of help. He confirmed that parents were in support of the proposal.</p> <p>JC explained that the Executive Head at Shepherdswell and Orchard would use the date to reset expectations and the EMATter approach to support education excellence at the schools.</p> <p>A Trustee asked whether LABs were in support of the extra days. JC confirmed that they were.</p> <p>Trustees were in support of the following approach for Inset days within the Trust:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 INSET days format (4 for PWS) for the next academic year 2024-2025. • Additional one day in 2023-24 for each of NIA, Sheps and Orchard <p>Trustees requested that parents received sufficient warning of the additional dates.</p>	
12. Board Self Evaluation	AR introduced the NGA Board Self Evaluation Tool and Trustees took time to consider it.	

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	Trustees recognised that skills audits had been completed earlier in the year and requested that these be consulted prior to an additional evaluation being undertaken. Action: AR to refer to previous skills audit returns and recommend next steps.	xi. AR
13. Policies review:	<p>The chair referred to the following previously circulated policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMAT Acceptable Usage Policy 2023-24 • EMAT Anti- Fraud Policy Statement 2023-24 • EMAT Charging & Remissions Policy 2023-24 • EMAT Children with health needs that cannot attend school Policy 2023-24 • EMAT Supporting pupils with medical conditions Policy 2023-24 • EMAT Scheme of Delegation 2023-24 • EMAT Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy 2023 • EMAT Whistleblowing Policy 2023 -24 • EMAT Pay Policy 2023-24 • EMAT Capability Policy 2023-24 <p>A Trustee noted the update of the PW's job title from Chief Operations Officer to Deputy Chief Executive Officer in the Scheme of Delegation and asked whether any changes to delegated authorities had accompanied this update. JC confirmed that there had been no fundamental changes and that the change of job title reflected duties already carried out by PW.</p> <p>Trustees unanimously approved the above policies.</p> <p>A Trustee asked whether the Trust had experienced any parental concerns around its RSE Curriculum in line with recent media reports. JC advised that the Trust had consulted widely last time the curriculum was changed and continues to share it with parents. we have had limited instances of parents withholding children from a specific lesson at Castle but no concerns had been raised.</p> <p>A Trustee reflected that the debate would continue but that the Trust had discharged its responsibilities in this area.</p> <p>JC invited any Trustee to review or consider the curriculum in more depth by consulting the Trust website or getting in touch with JL.</p> <p>JL advised that the Trust awaited the promised DfE transgender guidance. A Trustee suggested that reference be made to Institute of School Business Leaders (ISBL) published transgender guidance.</p>	
16. Next agenda items.	Trustees agreed the following items should be placed on the next agenda: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory accounts • Pay review recommendations • Governance audit 	
17. Any Other Business	Please see Confidential Minutes	
18. Dates of Next Meetings	Dates of Trust Board Next Meetings (until July 2024): Meeting 4. 18 th December 16.00-18.00 Meeting 5. 17 th April 16.00-18.00	Invites to meetings

Agenda item	Discussion	Action
	Meeting 6. 17 th July 13.00-15.00	had been sent

The meeting ended at 18.00

Signed by Chair of Trust Full Board.....

Name..... Date.....

Action log of the Trust Full Board Meeting held 25.09.2023

No.	Action	Owner
i.	AR and KC to work on a succession plan. Trustee recruitment in progress.	AR/KC
ii.	AR to complete a review late 2023, early 2024 regarding the changes to the FHRE and A&R committee. Ongoing.	AR
iii.	SEND report once secondary school data has been added to be an agenda item at a future meeting. Ongoing.	AR/RR
iv.	RT to add narrative were appropriate to future safeguarding reports to help the trustees understand the context of the data being shared with them. To be included at next S&P focussed meeting.	TT
v.	AR to speak to SM regarding a preferred lead area. Ongoing.	AR
vi.	AR to manage the position of Chair and Vice-Chair for the A&R and FHRE committees and report back once finalised. Ongoing.	AR
vii.	AR to speak to MC and JS regarding school allocation and report back. Ongoing.	AR
viii.	AR to arrange meeting with RA and HR team to discuss staff terms and conditions.	AR
ix.	JL to review impact of Ruth Baker-Leask's interventions at end of autumn term.	JL
x.	JL and RT to develop Safeguarding strategic planner.	JL
xi.	AR to refer to previous skills audit returns and recommend next steps.	AR