

East Midlands Academy Trust - Board Meeting

Pyramus House, Roman Way, Grange Park, Northampton NN4 5EA

16th December 2022 at 10.00am- **Hybrid meeting**

Second meeting of academic year 2022/2023

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: Ayo Salam (EMAT: Trustee) Fiona Wheeler (EMAT: Trustee) Martin Conlon (EMAT: Trustee) 📞 Stephen Morales (EMAT: Trustee) Andy Davis (EMAT: Trustee) – Chair 📞 Leigh Jones (EMAT: Trustee) 📞 Kate Whittlesey (Observer/Potential trustee) 📞</p> <p>Joshua Coleman (EMAT: CEO) Paul Wheeler (EMAT: COO) John Lawson (EMAT: Head of Education) Paul Osborne (EMAT: Governance Support Officer) – Minutes</p> <p>The clerk 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>	
2. Apologies	Apologies from, Kevin Crompton and Nick Bell were received and accepted by the board.	
3. Quoracy	The meeting was confirmed as quorate.	
4. Declarations of Interest	There were no declarations of interest pertaining to this agenda in addition to those already recorded on the annual Register of Interests.	
5. Minutes of EMAT TB meeting held on 30/09/2022 & matters arising not appearing on the action log	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on the 30/09/2022 were reviewed and agreed to be an accurate representation of the meetings.</p> <p>AD agreed to physically sign the minutes at the next face to face meeting.</p>	
6. Action Log from 30/09/2022	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Send schools allocation and HT contact details to trustees. Done. 2) Contact Nurole for SEND Trustee recruitment. Done. KW is attending the meeting as a potential trustee with a wealth of SEND experience. 3) Upload polices to websites. Done. 	
7. CEO Report (for information and discussion)	<p>JC highlighted the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All reports are being aligned to the strategic improvement plan (which 	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NIA verbal update Trust growth update 	<p>has been previously shared).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There have been some movement in 2019-2025 strategic improvement plan especially around SEND. As part of our strategy to spread our income streams and widen the participation in our schools we have opened a new nursery in Hardingsstone and about to do the same in Shepherdsweil, created three specialist SEND units within Castle and Hardingsstone and consolidated Shepherdsweil and Orchard's unit. These units once all open will accommodate approximately 40 pupils from EYFS - to KS2. Plans are in place designed for older years. Surveys completed with Headteachers/SLT the support they receive from head office and what improvements could be made. There is more information in agenda item 14. Safeguarding and behaviour has improved teaching and learning, and school improvement are focus areas. New head of governance due to start in January. Sickness days and employee relations have reduced. PR team has collaborated with schools to ensure EMAT has a strong positive position within our communities. New Executive Headteacher has been appointed at NIA with a planned start date of the 20th of February. <p>FW added that out of the applicants interviewed he was the standout candidate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The relationship with the new regional director team (replacing the old regional school's commissioner functions from September 22) has been a marked improvement from previously. The work with the Willows in Milton Keynes has been supported and a meeting with the trust development partner (the key relationship manager for the RD team) is penciled in for early in the new year. JD added that the Willows is at a try before you buy stage and are being supported by relevant EMAT stakeholders. <p>A trustee asked what analyses has been done to ensure the work going into Willows is not a distraction from the support given to all existing trust schools, especially NIA.</p> <p>JC thanked the trustee for the question and noted there will always be risks when taking on a new school. The specific risk with the Willows is</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> EMAT will invest resources into Willows, and they do not join. Willows may receive an Ofsted inspection which could change the grading of the school possibly negatively. Willows is negative to the support offered. <p>JC added that the positives far out way the risk and the current NIA timeline is at a place to confidently look at other schools joining EMAT.</p> <p>JC noted that the timeline for a school to join a MAT from start to finish can be up to 18 months and if we waited for NIA to be graded good it would delay this EMAT even further.</p> <p>JC advised that all of the other EMAT schools are receiving the required support and there are resources in place to do this and the work with Willows which is not a distraction. It is the right time to reach out to other schools to join EMAT.</p>	

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	<p>The trustee thanked JC for the answer and noted they have confidence in the team to know this is the right time for Willows to be approached.</p> <p>A trustee added that in his experience if you do not plan for growth you risk being left behind and encourages EMAT to look for areas of growth and continue to collaborate closely with the regional director.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of our 5-year strategic plan we have begun speculative conversations with an “angel investor” on creating a temporary/permanent and supply staff agency to reduce costs and drive-up standards. We will bring details as they evolve. <p>LJ offered to support with setting up the supply staff agency to help insure it is competitive.</p> <p>A trustee suggested that JC/PW investigate Zen educate who run a similar system to that proposed.</p> <p>JC/PW thanked LJ and the trustee for the offer and will bear it in mind.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The wellbeing and mental health of pupils and staff are well documented and publicised. To further compliment the work already undertaken in this area we have a meeting scheduled in January to discuss with the Northampton Childrens Trust a joint venture. The concept is to have a JV that will employ specialist staff in social work, mental health, educational psychologists and speech and language that we will deploy across our schools. If both the employment agency and this JV works, we will be able to improve our support to our family of schools and long term we may be able to sell these services to other trusts and schools locally. <p>SM noted how positive this work is and if it came to fruition it would mark EMAT as a trailblazer in this area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have an exchange visit organised for the 25th of January 2023 with the Government of Jersey, Children, Young People, Education and Skills colleagues. They are looking at a range of our practices in inclusion. We are hoping this will build a long-term partnership that we can have professional exchanges with ours and their staff. <p><u>Head of Education Report.</u></p> <p>JL highlighted the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pleased with the progress being made towards the objectives and is confident all schools are moving forward. There is a realistic view of where each school is and the areas that require improvement are known and being worked on. Orchards SLT has been changed and improved outcomes are expected from these changes. Curriculum thinking and teaching and learning are good and being used regularly. Schools are being challenged when teaching is inconsistent and asked why and what support are they receiving. Headteachers have been told that if teaching does not improve your school will not improve if teaching does not improve your outcomes will not improve. The performance management has been sharpened so all teachers have/will be given an objective to improve the quality of their teaching and 	<p>PW/JC</p> <p>PW/JC</p>

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	<p>improving outcomes, which links to the SIP. Rosenshine principles are being used to assist with this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant teachers will also have a leadership target in their performance report aligned to improving the curriculum. • KR continues to provide quality data assessment work and asking the schools how you are using the data to ensure there is impact and outcomes continue to improve. • The use of the AIP is being reviewed to see if they are still required in the current format in all schools. • No more marking indicates that EMAT is at or in cases slightly above the national average and shows the progress being made across the trust. • When pupils are in our schools for 5 months plus they are at national average or above. <p>A trustee noted that in regard to the Key Stage 1 Results 2021-22 - National Comparisons data for expected standard for Reading, Writing and Maths it is significantly below national.</p> <p>JL agreed these results are not good enough. At NIA and Orchard a lot of the pupils who joined are low prior attainers. As the pupil's progress through the schools they catch up. For the other schools they are other factors and discussions and support has been instigated.</p> <p>JL added that the progress pupils make from their starting point is favourable, but improvements are always being sought including the work ongoing with the SIP.</p> <p>A discussion followed regarding the school's overview RAG rating and what criteria are used to decide the rating.</p> <p>JL advised that the RAG rating is based on his confidence going upon his expertise as an ex-Ofsted inspector. Stimpson for example has poor KS1 data when compared to national but they have a lot of low prior attainers. The school has a specialist provision unit whose data is included in the public data. When this data is removed to give a truer comparison the data improves. JL highlighted that this years in year data is showing significant improvements.</p> <p>JL added that during visits the teaching of Phonics is very good, their early years provisions is strong, and the whole school teaching and use of assessment is strong. The leadership is strong who have taken decisive actions to improve the quality of teaching with improvements seen in Reading and Phonics. When pupils are interviewed their personal development is far ahead of many other schools, behaviour is strong and the relationship with parents is very good. Taking all of these factors into account is the reasons why the RAG rating for Stimpson is green.</p> <p>JL added that the two schools with the highest mobility, highest proportion of EAL, SEND and in areas of high deprivation are Stimpson and Orchard.</p> <p>A trustee asked what target has been set and what period given to close the gaps seen in the KS1 data at Stimpson.</p> <p>JC noted the data highlighted is for attainment, the progress data from the end of KS1 to the end of KS2 and shows.</p> <p>i. Reading -0.6. 1 would show expected. Hardingstone has the highest</p>	

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	<p>attainment score across the trust but a progress score of -1.2.</p> <p>ii. Writing +1.1 and Maths +0.7 which shows good progress.</p> <p>The data shows the pupils make strong progress at Stimpson the focus on achieving good attainment data.</p> <p>iii. Stimpson has more new to country pupils than any other EMAT schools with many having no English. EAL audits were completed across the trust and Simpsons strategy is proven to help settle these pupils into school quickly and help access the curriculum as quickly as possible and the high-level of enrichment opportunities.</p> <p>A trustee noted the importance of setting data in context and asked for Stimpson is the quality of teaching strong and interventions appropriate.</p> <p>JL confirmed yes to both.</p> <p>The trustee noted the importance of progress data being highlighted.</p> <p>JC noted that EMAT has always given pupils strong progress and post CV-19 all schools are in a better position to improve this further.</p> <p>A discussion followed regarding the importance of communication to external stakeholders to demonstrate what EMAT schools do in relation to the progress being made and what pupils have achieved from their starting point.</p>	
<p>8. Updates from</p> <p>i. Standards & Performance</p> <p>ii. FHR & Estates</p> <p>iii. Audit & Risk</p>	<p>i. LJ highlighted the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda covered the SIP, NIA update, KS4 results, Thompson Teams safeguarding update which did not highlight any major concerns and parental engagement at Castle and Hardingstone. <p>ii. The trustees were happy the updates from the FHR & Estates and committee had been covered in this meeting.</p> <p>iii. MC highlighted the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mazars were very complimentary towards PW and his team concerning the accounts being done in good time. • Chris Rising (MacIntyre Hudson) presented an Internal Audit Report for Year 2021-2022, in this report he presented an overall GREEN rated opinion. • 2022-2023 target are Purchasing & Payments, VAT, Strategic Planning, Facilities Management & Quality Assurance. • Updates given regarding risk register and information updates on GDPR and governance. 	
<p>9. Trustees school allocation visit updates.</p> <p>i. PWS</p>	<p>KW highlighted that she visited PWS with Natalie Packer focussing on SEND. During her visit she met with the Headteacher, pupils, SENCO and visited the HUB. The visit was very positive and the pupils she spoke to were proud to be a pupil at PWS.</p> <p>KW told LD that the SEND information report was incorrect. LD had actioned this by the end of the day.</p>	

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	AD noted his positive experience from his visit in June especially for the staff helping the pupils while A level results were handed out and supporting them with university application.	
10. Pupil Premium Annual Reports (For info and questions only)	The trustees noted these reports and had no questions at this time.	
11. Finance matters (for approval): i. Annual Report and Financial Statements 2021/22 ii. Receive Auditor's management letters iii. Audit Completion report	<p><u>Annual Report and Financial Statements 2021/22</u></p> <p>PW highlighted the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report was presented and discussed at the recent Audit & Risk committee with the auditors in attendance. • £252,000 surplus achieved against a budget of £297,000 and a forecast of £320,000. The difference was primarily due to the payment of a subsidy in March of £54,000 to the NIA catering contractor who were suffering losses. The other schools catering contractors were broadly in line. • The statutory and September accounts show the same results (outside of the pension fund adjustments) which is a pleasing result and demonstrates the monthly accounts trustees see tie in with the audited statutory accounts • The auditors highlighted only two minor points which is positive when compared to other trust the auditors work with. • All findings from the previous years were cleared. • Going concern has been sent to the auditors and they are happy with EMATs assessment of going concern. • Reserve policy is effectively based on one months expenditure cash reserves slightly above policy due to some unspent capital. • Current year reserve budget set at £235,000, the November accounts have just been completed and show a reserve of £62,000 which is on track to meet the end of year figure. <p>A trustee noted how positive it is to see an unqualified set of accounts and asked what 2023-2024 accounts currently look like.</p> <p>PW the current projection is to maintain approximately £250,000 reserve budget. The pressures will be energy costs and pay rises.</p> <p>For pay rises EMAT awarded the suggested figure for teachers and support staff which was between 5-10% we had budgeted 3%. There is still uncertainty if the pay rises will be fully funded if not there are plans in place to manage the additional costs.</p> <p>For energy cost when the last contract was agreed there was a £100,000 annual saving compared to previous. These savings have been invested into energy savings including LED lighting and insulation. The expected increase for the next contract is +100%-150% on current costs.</p>	

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	<p>The trustees had no comment/questions regarding the Annual Report and Financial Statements 2021/22, Auditor's management letters and Audit Completion report and noted these reports had been discussed in detail in during other committee meetings.</p> <p>AD proposed MC seconded that these accounts and letters can be signed by KC.</p>	
<p>12. Pay progression / Pay Recommendations</p>	<p>PW highlighted the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff are reviewed and proposed by the school SLT and subsequently moderated by PW and JC. The appraisal period runs for twelve months from 1st September to 31st August with all appraisals being reviewed by 31st October. Subject to approval all pay decisions are back dated annually to 1st September. • All central staff received the greater of £1925 or 5% as a minimum. This was back paid to September 2022. • Variance -to be funded from contingencies £266,996, contingencies covered £262,000. • NIC savings £135,505 • This year the Head of Education, CEO and the Senior Workforce Planning and HR Business Partner have reviewed the appraisal documents and updated to make it more robust assessing against outcomes and standards, such as the data drops and teacher standards. <p>A trustee asked if the average pay increase stated at between 5-10% is based upon the pay band and the lower paid would receive the higher percentage increase. PW confirmed that is correct.</p> <p>A trustee asked for performance management are their examples of teachers not hitting targets whose pay did not increase outside of statutory increases. JC noted there are, and robust discussions took place when required.</p> <p>The trustee followed up and asked if any teachers have challenged the final decision. JC advised for this year no.</p> <p>A discussion followed regarding the green book and PW advised that there are investigations ongoing to potentially move away from the green book this year. Trustees unanimously commended the Pay Recommendations and Pay Progression, and all due diligence had been conducted.</p>	
<p>13. Update from Forums & NLG</p>	<p>i & iv not discussed due to time constraints.</p> <p>ii. JC highlighted the following.</p>	

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i. GDPR report (For info and questions only) ii. NGA Progress review Dec 2022 iii. School uniform iv. SEND (For info and questions only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KC and JC have met, and a formal performance review has been completed and is to be shared with the trustees. In the next trust board meeting details regarding the performance management report will be shared. iii. JC highlighted the following. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance regarding affordable uniform live from September. Pupil parliament are leading on this, the outcome is that the majority of pupils are happy with the uniform but improvements regarding gender neutral uniform have been suggested and will be incorporated. The current plan is for branded tops for primary, secondary staying as current but reducing branded PE kit and introducing gender neutral uniform. <p>A discussion followed regarding having no branded PE kit and the use of a school owned uniform which would be purchased by the school, managed by the school, and washed by the school. The trustees thought this was an innovative idea.</p>	JC/KC JC
14. Stakeholder surveys i. Parent/Carer & Pupil inc school actions ii. Strategic Improvement plan inc Central services survey iii. Staff (All school overview) / Individual school results	<p>The governors noted the surveys and had no questions at this time and noted there were no areas of concern.</p> <p>JC reiterated that most of the questions are from the Ofsted framework.</p> <p>PO advised that comparisons with the previous surveys will be compiled and shared at the next meeting. PO added that if a trustee wants to see an individual schools results to contact him.</p> <p>JC added that the use of 'unsure' will be reviewed and removed from future surveys where applicable.</p>	 PO PO
15. Policies for ratification:	<p>Policies for ratification:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Whistleblowing policy. EMAT Admissions Policy 2023/2024. <p>Trustees unanimously ratified all polices</p> <p><i>Post-meeting note policies uploaded to the website. PO actioned.</i></p> <p>JC noted that the Proposed EMAT Admissions Policy 2024/2025 is for information only and asked if the trustees had any comments to highlight these.</p> <p>JC added that EMAT's plan is to become its own admissions policy but there is no timeline on this and will depend on the trust size.</p> <p>JC highlighted that NIA have been classed as operationally full.</p> <p>The trustees had no comments at this time.</p>	

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16. Next Agenda items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey comparisons with previous 	
17. AOB	There were no AOB	
18. Dates of next meetings	Dates of meetings 2022/2023: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thursday 4th May 2023 at 10am Friday 28th July 2023 at 10am AGM - Monday 27th February 2023 at 4.00pm 	Calendar appointments have been sent

Meeting closed at 12.20pm

Signed by

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Date.....

East Midlands Academy Trust

Action Log of the Trust Board meeting held on 16.12.2022

Item	Action	Owner
1.	PW/JC to investigate if the offer of help regarding the from LJ is beneficial regarding the temporary/ permanent supply staff agency. Page 3.	PW/JC
2.	PW/JC to investigate if Zen educate is a useful resource regarding the temporary/ permanent and supply staff agency. Page 3.	PW/JC
3.	KC and JC to share the formal performance review with the trustees. Page 8.	KC/JC
4.	Performance report to be shared at the next Trust board meeting. Page 8.	JC
5.	PO to share survey comparisons between the June 2022 and November surveys at the next Trust board meeting. Page 8.	PO
6.	PO to investigate the use of unsure as an answer and remove where possible. Page 8.	PO