



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DRAFT MINUTES of the fourteenth meeting of the Directors of the Academy Trust Company duly convened and held at John Mason School on Wednesday 21st October 2015 at 5.30 pm.

Present:	Douglas Aitken (DA), Sarah Brinkley (Headteacher) (SB), Paul Brooks (PB), Emma Brown (EB), Simon Burchill (SBu), Jean Challis (JC), Maxine Evans (ME) (from 6.50pm), Barry Graham (BG), Louise Griffin (LG), Jonathan Hopkins (JH), Christopher Palmer (CP), Amanda Sissons (AS), Mark Timbs (MT).
In attendance	Julian Hehir (JTH) (Clerk).
Apologies	Apologies were received and accepted from Helen Bottomley (HB) and Anne Highsmith (AH).

Item		Action
1.	Election of Chair and Vice Chair	
	Having been nominated and seconded, Jonathan Hopkins was ELECTED Chair for the academic year 2015-16. On being nominated and seconded, Paul Brooks was ELECTED Vice-Chair for the academic year 2015-16.	Clerk
2.	Notice and quorum	
	Due notice of the meeting had been given and a quorum was present.	Clerk
3.	Apologies	
	As reported above.	
4.	Parent Director vacancies	
	The Board noted the results of the election for Parent Directors on the 19 th October 2015 and APPOINTED Simon Burchill and Mark Timbs as Directors, their term of office ending on 19 th October 2019. The Board noted that Louise Griffin had been elected as a Staff Director and appointed by the Members at their meeting on 21 st October, her term of office ending on 10 th September 2019.	Clerk/AL

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	The Members had also APPOINTED Anne Highsmith as a Director, her term of office ending on 20 th October 2019.	
5.	Declaration of Governors' interests	
	No revised or new declarations of interest were declared. Directors had been reminded that they were required to complete new declarations of interest forms and return them to Alan Lane or Lorna Wiltshire. The Board was also reminded of new guidance that had recently been issued concerning Governors' declarations of interests and requirements to publish these on the school website. New Directors would need to complete their declarations as soon as possible.	All + AL/LW to action
6.	Confidential matters	
	There were no matters to report on the agenda.	Clerk
7.	Minutes 9th July 2015	
	The minutes of the meeting held on the 9 th July 2015 were agreed and signed as an accurate record, subject to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The replacement of "Boar" by "Board" in the first sentence of minute 9; • the replacement of the acronym CISTRA by SISRA in the last sentence of minute; • insertion of item 12. Committees as the header on the fifth page, before "(1) Reports and minutes"; • re-numbering of the Headteacher's report as item 13 and replacement of "Bard" by "Board" in the header to minute 15. 	JH/Clerk
8.	Matters arising	
	Minute 10 page 3 – PB had been nominated to take the lead on behalf of JMATA with the Chair of Fitzharrys School Governing Body, in establishing the provisional Abingdon Education Services Company Ltd arrangements during September 2015. There were no other substantive matters arising that were not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda and in these minutes.	
9.	Student Council report	
	SB reported that a new Student Council had just been inaugurated; student representatives had just been appointed. The first meeting would take place early next term with a focus on selected aspects of the School Improvement Plan. Oona Fairgreave was the staff "Student Choice Champion". It was suggested that a link governor from the Board could be appointed, with student representatives also being invited regularly to attend the Board to report on Student Council activities. SB	

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	had also met with a local Councillor to explore how students could be engaged in democratic processes through the Student Council and elsewhere, in a more dynamic way.	
10.	John Mason Association (JMA) report	
	<p>JC reported that the Welsh Farm trip had been a great success.</p> <p>The JMA, with a number of new recruits enlisted, had its first meeting of the academic year on 13th October 2015. The year 7 quiz night supported by JMA, would take place on the 27th November.</p>	
11.	Draft Annual Report and Accounts for 2014/15	
	<p>The Board had before them the draft annual report and accounts.</p> <p>Directors noted that the contents were mainly historic and therefore, they did not wish to suggest any substantive alterations. SB confirmed that the data therein had informed the current School Development Plan.</p> <p>Subject to any amendments required by the Trust's auditors, completion and approval of the financial pages and any necessary typographical amendments being made, it was AGREED to authorise the Strategy & Audit Committee to agree the final version of the report and accounts at its next meeting on the 25th November.</p> <p>The Board thanked Alan Lane for his work in preparing the annual report and accounts.</p>	<p>S&A Cttee/AL</p> <p>All</p>
12.	Annual Schedule of Governing Body business 2015/16	
	<p>The Board had been circulated with the annual schedule of business produced by Oxfordshire County Council. The schedule clearly identified statutory and other matters that the Board had to consider during the course of the year, the relevant timescales/terms for doing so and the level at which decision making was required, eg governing body, committee, individual governor.</p> <p>JH and SB confirmed that, together and in consultation with committee chairs, they would allocate appropriate matters to the Board and committees and schedule them into an annual agenda planning process.</p> <p>It was emphasised that in terms of Governors' ability to call the Headteacher to account, the schedule was a useful tool to work through and identify the matters that required decision making and compliance.</p>	JH/SB
13.	Committees	
	(1) <u>Appointments to committees for 2015-16 and review of</u>	

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committee terms of reference

The current terms of reference for the three committees had been circulated.

It was **AGREED** to adopt the terms of reference for 2015-16 without amendment, for the Finance, Premises & Personnel and Curriculum, Welfare & Achievement Committees.

It was **AGREED** that the terms of reference for the Strategy & Audit Committee should be amended at paragraph 3.1 to "the Committee shall comprise the Chair and Vice-Chair for the time being of the Board of Directors together with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of each of the other committees set up by the Board, all being ex officio members."

Membership

AGREED as follows:

- FPP – HB PB SB JC LG JH
- CWA – DA SB EB ME BG AS (JH)
- SA – PB JH BG

Additional new Directors to be appointed in due course.

(2) Committee reports

FPP 22nd September 2015

JH had circulated the draft minutes of the meeting. The main issues reported from the minutes were as follows:

- The election of the Chair and Vice-Chair.
- The local authority health and safety inspection in September which had proceeded successfully for the school. JC and Lorna Wiltshire were thanked by JH for their contribution to ensuring a successful inspection.
- Support staff review – the review of the staffing structure and roles was due to be completed at the end of November/early December. Separately for teaching staff at JMAT, performance review outcomes would feed into pay recommendations. SB expected all of the associated paperwork to be completed by 23rd October with the Pay Panel due to meet on 5th November to take decisions. A review of the teaching staff, senior and middle leaders' structures would take place in 2016.

CWA 22nd September 2015

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	<p>BG had circulated the draft minutes. The main issues reported from the minutes were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee had reviewed subject choices at A/S level. In particular, they had questioned the reasons for the number of “unclassified” grades and had commissioned a parental survey on pupils’ decision making processes on joining the sixth form. • A range of the JMAT’s essential statutory policies had been reviewed and adopted. • Exam results: the committee had looked carefully at predictions and were satisfied that current pupils’ progress was much more on track with the predictions than in the year 2013/14. • Rigorous attainment plans were now in place for post 16 pupils. Better support was also being put in place for supporting high ability pupils in the process of applying for Russell group and top universities. • A new Director of Maths would shortly be in post. • More robust monitoring of performance was in place now, presenting a strong picture for A level outcomes. • Monitoring and evaluation; a detailed schedule was in place which mapped out the four priorities for monitoring for the 15 weeks in Term 1 and 2. <p><u>S&A 1st October 2015</u></p> <p>There were no additional matters to report.</p> <p>The Board received the reports of the committees.</p>	<p>All to note</p>
<p>14.</p>	<p>Headteacher’s report</p>	
	<p>SB had circulated her report to Directors.</p> <p>Her main priority for term 1 had been to establish stability and consistency of expectation at John Mason School, in light of the 21 (of 54) new teaching staff that joined in September. Data concerning staff absence due to illness had significantly improved for the new academic year compared to the same time last year.</p> <p>Key challenges in the first term had been recruitment, the focus on teaching and learning and the support staff review. Several Governors had received positive feedback from the open evening for prospective new entrants to the school in 2016/17 and beyond. There had been some comments about the expense of transport for pupils who might travel to the school from Steventon, Drayton and other outlying areas</p>	<p>FPP Cttee</p>

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and the FPP Committee undertook to consider these circumstance and any action to alleviate the costs through negotiation within the Abingdon Consortium.

The Board asked a range of questions and SB responded, as summarised in the following:

- Support staff structure – there were a complex range of issues to address and SB would discuss the aims and objectives of the review in detail at the next FPP Committee. The impact on standards was the key focus of the review, as indeed were all of the early initiatives that SB had put in place at the school.
- Three house leaders had been appointed to lead on the ethos of introducing a house system and a pupil premium champion had been appointed (see earlier minute).
- The Headteacher’s report did not have direct impacts as such; it was more strategically focused and the impacts of strategies would be addressed by the committees in November and during the course of the year.
- Pupil premium – SB would provide a succinct, one page “key performance indicators” report including a “dashboard on behaviour and attendance at future meetings,
- The new staff structure this term had impacted in a positive way on pupils; pupil attendance had progressed to 95%. However, two of the new appointments had support plans in place and another was being assessed on capability. The Board was satisfied that SB was doing everything possible to address the challenges posed by the recruitment of a large number of new staff to the school.
- SEF data – the Board would agree on the data sets and documents that it wished to review at committee level. BG clarified that the CWA committee would meet with subject leaders to scrutinise the data, with a dashboard summary being presented subsequently to the Board.
- SB outlined in detail the means through which to embed consistent, incisive and regular written feedback and DIRT (page 4 of her report refers).
- School Improvement Action Plan: SB had “RAG” rated the action plans in place from the school improvement leaders and would report on the impacts during the next cycle of committee and Board reporting.
- There would be checking and reporting on the impacts of the support staff structure review with respect to attendance and behaviour.

SB

SB

SB

JH commended all staff for their efforts this term.

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	<p>The Board received the Headteacher’s report.</p> <p><u>Pupil Premium</u>: ME reported back on her meeting of 29th September with Lucy Foster, commissioned by the Board, to discuss and review the Pupil Premium (PP) Plan. The purpose of ME’s visit had been primarily to review the PP Plan to ensure that it was fit for purpose and good value for money. With LF she had discussed ways in which the plan could be sharpened. They had discussed training and development for Higher Level TAs with a view to making explicit the links to ‘Quality First teaching’, as well as the impact of the ‘Alternative Provision’ and whether continuing with these activities would deliver the desired outcomes.</p> <p>Among follow up actions, ME had been provided with an updated PP Plan and had suggested a formal review of PP by an external consultant. She would meet again with LF in November/December including a “learning walk”.</p> <p><u>Safeguarding and child protection</u>: DA reported back on his visit on 20th October, commissioned by the Board, concerning safeguarding and child protection. There were some concerns about the security of the school site. He had also checked with Jane Howse on the central record of visitors which appeared to be in order. DA said that it would be very helpful to obtain the Local Authority Designated Officer’s (LADO) report from a school visit recently to identify any other areas for concern.</p> <p>In general, DA had been assured by his visit that satisfactory child protection and safeguarding measures were in place.</p>	
15.	External Review of Governance	
	<p>(1) <u>External review</u>: there had been a relatively minor change to the text of the report from Phil Hand that had been presented to the Board on the 9th July.</p> <p>(2) <u>Board strategy</u>: A follow up Board Strategy meeting had taken place on the 18th September and JH reported the main outcomes; a separate paper highlighting these had been circulated to Directors.</p> <p>The key strategic areas identified for progression were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board’s priorities • Tracking • Vision and Values • Governance. 	

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	In summary, all of the actions identified against these areas would be put before the appropriate committee and Board meetings in due course, for approval where required. A forward plan for directors' involvement and 'job description' equivalent on expectations will be circulated for feedback at the start of next term. A work plan for the vision and values element would be produced in January 2016.	JH/All to support
16.	Policy review schedule for Trust Board policies	
	The CWA Committee at its last meeting had reviewed and adopted several statutory policies in accordance with the Trust's schedule.	LW
17.	Governor training	
	A bespoke Governor training programme was being developed. It was recommended in the meantime that all Directors should undertake the brief on-line "Prevent" strategy and safeguarding training. The relevant link will be circulated to directors.	All
18.	Correspondence	
	There was none.	
19.	Any other business	
	A celebration evening, to which all Directors were invited, would take place on the 3 rd December 2015 and contributions of £10 from each director requested to help fund the reception for guests.	All
	It was suggested that the Board should develop a separate scheme of delegation to its articles of association, so that this could be in place if and when the school was inspected.	ME/All
	This being Chris Palmer's last meeting as a Director of the Board, Members thanked Chris for his last four years of valuable service to them and wished him well in the future.	All
20.	Date of next meeting	
	Thursday 10 th December at 5.30pm.	

The meeting ended at 8.02pm.

Minutes drafted 3.00pm 22/10/15

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