



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DRAFT MINUTES of the twenty first meeting of the Directors of the Academy Trust Company duly convened and held at John Mason School on Thursday 13th October 2016 at 5.30pm.

Present:	Douglas Aitken (DA), Helen Bottomley (HB), Sarah Brinkley (Headteacher) (SB), Paul Brooks (PB) (from 6.12pm), Simon Burchill (SBu), Jean Challis (JC), Louise Griffin (LG), Anne Highsmith (AH), Jonathan Hopkins (JH) (until 7.18pm), Amanda Sissons (AS). Mark Timbs (MT). Sue McRae (Associate Director).
In attendance	Alan Lane (AL); Lucy Foster (LF), Mat Davies (MD) – SLT; Julian Hehir (Clerk).
Apologies	Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Emma Brown (EB), Maxine Evans (ME), Barry Graham (BG) and Mark Lay (ML) (Associate Director).

Item		Action
1.	Notice and quorum	
	Due notice of the meeting had been given and a quorum was present. Jonathan Hopkins (JH) having been duly nominated and seconded, was elected Chair for the academic year 2016-17. JH nominated Paul Brooks (PB) as Vice-Chair for 2016-17 and on being seconded, PB was duly elected	Clerk
2.	Apologies	
	As reported above.	Clerk
3.	Declaration of Governors' interests	
	There were no revised or new declarations of interest to be declared.	Clerk
4.	Confidential matters	
	There were no confidential matters notified on the agenda.	Clerk
5.	Minutes of the meetings held on 7th July and 14th September 2016	

Date of signing..... In the Chair.....



	The minutes of the meetings held on the 7 th July and 14 th September 2016, including the confidential minute of the latter meeting, were agreed and signed as an accurate record and filed accordingly.	JH/Clerk
6.	Matters arising	
	<p>With respect to inclusion policy and practice, MT gave a detailed account of the “JMS Plus” strategy that had been put in place and of adjusted systems now in operation for tracking pupils. Work was ongoing in assessing the impact of interventions on the pupils involved.</p> <p>There were no other matters arising that were not covered by items elsewhere on the agenda and in these minutes.</p>	Clerk
7.	Student Council report	
	<p>Rebecca and Lucy, representatives of the Student Council accompanied by Mrs Oona Fairgreave, reported to Directors on the aims and ambitions of the Student Council for the current academic year.</p> <p>The principal aim was to re-establish the Student Council among the student body and to have a larger impact in future on the school community as a whole. In September, a student assembly and survey had taken place, representatives of the Student Council had also met with the JMA and been successful in a bid for funding from the JMA.</p> <p>Rebeca and Lucy spoke to a proposed student improvement plan for KS3, 4 and 5 and raised the possibility of a student conference taking place. Other plans included a charity event calendar, a student survey (see above), teaching and learning walks and a student voice day.</p> <p>The Directors questioned whether the Student Council remained interested in student associate governor positions on the Board as part of a ‘community support’ committee that had been outlined previously, and it was agreed to explore this further as future governance plans developed, taking account of Multi Academy Trust developments.</p> <p>The Board thanked the Student Council representatives for their report.</p>	Chair
8.	Headteacher’s report	

Date of signing..... In the Chair.....



<p>SB referred to a document circulated at the meeting, hereafter referred to as the “purple book” (Ofsted Summative Documents) in reporting to the Board.</p> <p>The document was essentially a guide for staff and Directors in being “Ofsted ready” for inspection by HMI. It set out school priorities and actions and the five key messages to convey on action areas in the event of Ofsted inspection. Included against the key messages on attainment and progress for key stage 3 and 4 were:</p> <p><u>Personal development, behaviour and welfare:</u> this element reflected what was in the SEF. A new behaviour policy had been recommended and in terms of scrutiny of these themes, the supporting evidence with respect to the five key messages was available on the school’s intranet.</p> <p><u>Teaching, learning and assessment:</u> in a drive to improve consistency, the school was being much more systematic about monitoring and evaluation. The quality of teaching had improved as a result of a bespoke CPD programme. Once again, with the launch of a “Steps to success” programme and a focus on Learning objectives as questions, the supporting evidence for these improvements was on the intranet.</p> <p><u>Leadership and management:</u> this was entirely focused on rapidly improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in a culture of honesty, kindness and respect, where safeguarding was effective. Governance featured here, as leaders were held to account for the performance of their teams by Governors and line managers.</p> <p>Turning to the SEF (in the purple book) this included key lines of enquiry (KLEs) and key performance indicators (KPIs) available for Ofsted assessment. The School Improvement Plan would start the development of actions against the KLEs/KPIs during the next week so that by the end of the year’s plan, all actions would be “RAG rated” according to progress.</p> <p>The Board raised a number of questions and SB, VM, LF and MD responded accordingly:</p> <p>Lesson observation updates: these were now reported in terms of the percentage of teachers who were consistently good/”consistently outstanding”. Because data had been recalibrated from these observations, the outcomes had appeared somewhat downgraded recently.</p> <p>Summer 2016 exam results analysis would be added to the intranet shortly.</p>	
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Date of signing..... In the Chair.....



	<p>Directors should provide some additional materials for the leadership and management evidence to the documentation, namely, the outcomes and recommendations of last year’s external governance review and acknowledgement of the Board’s responsibility for setting the vision and values of the school. Visits by Directors were also important to incorporate into the purple book as these embedded their role in relation to the key performance indicators in the SEF/SIP. A safeguarding update and data training for the Board should also be incorporated.</p> <p>“Progress 8”: this would develop as a KPI in the future. LF explained the methodology of assessment for Progress 8 and the purposes to which the outcomes would be put. An information pack for Directors would be developed and included in a training/ update session on data-use for the Board. The new Progress 8 requirements are an important measure but not a sole-driver for school improvement; a suite of judgments are used for assessing estimated against actual attainment.</p> <p>The annual safeguarding audit/report to the Local Authority Designated Officer, would be submitted in December and related policies were being reviewed and updated as required.</p> <p>The Headteacher was thanked for her report.</p>	<p>Chair/SB</p> <p>LF</p>
9.	Reports/minutes	
	<p>(a) <u>JMA</u> – JC reported that the JMA had been working alongside the Student Council (reference minute 7 above) and that a Bingo night to raise funds was arranged for 2nd December.</p> <p>(b) <u>Committees</u>:</p> <p>(i) <u>Strategy & Audit – 30th August 2016</u>: it was reported that all matters considered by the Committee at the meeting were addressed elsewhere on the Board’s agenda. The Board asked about timing of the Abingdon Consortium’s analysis of 2016 exam results and that a report on these should be submitted to the next CWA Committee.</p> <p>(ii) <u>Curriculum, Welfare and Achievement – 14th September 2016</u>: there were no matters arising or to report that were not addressed elsewhere on the Board’s agenda for this meeting.</p> <p>(iii) <u>Finance, Premises and Personnel – 14th September 2016</u>: the financial reports at item 10 of the agenda addressed the matters that had been discussed by the Committee. JH commented that there was a vacancy for the Deputy Head of Maths position and that the Committee had also received a progress report concerning the development of the Abingdon Learning Trust. LW added that planning permission had been granted to install new gates to enhance security/safeguarding.</p>	

Date of signing..... In the Chair.....



<p>(iv) <u>Review of committee membership and terms of reference</u>: these had been circulated with the agenda and it was recommended best practice that these should be reviewed at the first meeting of the academic year.</p> <p>It was AGREED:</p> <p>(a) that the membership of the Committees should remain as follows: FPP – Sarah Brinkley, Jonathan Hopkins, Helen Bottomley, Paul Brooks, Jean Challis, Louise Griffin, Anne Highsmith, Douglas Aitken. CWA – (Sarah Brinkley*), (Jonathan Hopkins*), Emma Brown, Maxine Evans, Barry Graham, Amanda Sissons, Simon Burchill, Mark Timbs.</p> <p>Strategy & Audit – Paul Brooks, Jonathan Hopkins, Barry Graham, Maxine Evans, Douglas Aitken</p> <p>*Where the Headteacher and Board Chair are members of both committees, but JH sits as Chair of FPP and SB delegates to others on SLT regular CWA attendance. Committee meetings are held on the same evening but timings will be staggered to allow individual attendance by SB in particular for CWA agenda items on request.</p> <p>Associate Members have been co-opted to FPP for a further year, to include Mark Lay (Finance/Premises; Abingdon & Witney College) and Su McRae (H&S; Abingdon School)</p> <p>(b) That the terms of reference for the three Committees should remain unchanged, but that a mid-year review of them be undertaken. As part of this review, the invitation to all Directors to attend S&A Committee pertaining to the committee’s business could be clarified.</p> <p>(c) <u>Lead Directors’ reports</u>: MT updated the Board on the forthcoming Careers Day for year 8 and the success in engaging with Directors to participate in this. AH had circulated a report on her safeguarding visit and she and DA reported on pupils’ perceptions that they “felt safe” in school.</p> <p>The Board commended SB on her letter to parents, which was reassuring, following an incident involving a pupil at an Oxford School. It was recommended that a joint briefing or update on safety should be co-ordinated across the lead institutions of the Abingdon Consortium for Education for sixth form students, many of whom move between the school sites during the day sometimes alone or smaller numbers.</p>	<p>SB/DA</p>
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10.	Financial and other reports	
	<p>The Chair took these matters following item 11 on the agenda, after which PB assumed the Chair for the remainder of the meeting. AL attended to present the reports:</p> <p>(i) <u>Quarterly Financial Report</u>: AL drew attention to the following:</p> <p>In September 2015, the budget balances had been worryingly low, but in the year ended 31st August 2016 a substantial surplus had been generated which was very positive. There had been substantial surpluses on unrestricted and restricted (GAG) funds and a welcome reduction in the balance of monies being held to support Pupil Premium (PP) students. PP funding had been properly used for its intended purposes.</p> <p>The Trust was holding a very large sum received from the EFA as a result of two successful Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) bids, for window replacement and for fences and other security improvements. The healthy cash flow position throughout the year, maintained by holding the substantial EFA CIF grant instalments would change rapidly during the Autumn as the works commenced.</p> <p>The Local Government Pension Scheme deficit had risen by circa £1million and would continue to rise.</p> <p>There had been substantial reductions in the use of and cost of supply cover as this had been managed much more effectively than last year.</p> <p>The Board AGREED:</p> <p>(a) the revised budget circulated with the report;</p> <p>(b) asked FPP Committee to continue to monitor the quarterly financial statements and take any necessary actions;</p> <p>(c) asked SLT to begin work as soon as possible on the curriculum plan for 2017/18 with a view to integrating staffing requirements with the budget planning process; and</p> <p>(d) subject to the application to join ALT being approved, to work with that Trust to establish procedures for the approval of staff appointments consistent with good financial planning.</p> <p>(ii) <u>Letter to Accounting Officer from the Chief Executive of the Education Funding Agency</u>:</p> <p>The letter was received and noted.</p>	<p>AL</p> <p>SB</p> <p>AL</p>

Date of signing..... In the Chair.....



11.	Governing Body business 2016/17	
	<p>JH gave an oral progress report on the proposed Abingdon Learning Trust (ALT) and the outcomes of the Board’s decisions at the meeting on 14th September concerning consultations on this proposal with a view to receiving feedback that would inform further decisions.</p> <p>A joint letter from the Headteachers of John Mason, Rush Common and Fitzharrys’ schools on the proposal had been issued to other Headteachers of Abingdon schools. A letter informing parents of the proposed ALT had also been issued and there had been extensive coverage in the local media. There had not been any feedback to these informal consultations. School events such as open evenings had also taken place this term and no-one had raised any questions or comments regarding ALT.</p> <p>In light of the above, the next logical steps recommended were to make an application to the DfE to formally establish the ALT and in the meantime, to progress with the required due diligence assessments and negotiations with other schools. On the basis of these, a recommendation would be put to the appropriate committee(s) in November and the Board thereafter, to dissolve the John Mason Academy Trust and to become part of the ALT, if that was the desire of the Members and Directors.</p> <p>It was reported that Rush Common, in already being set up as a MAT had established a development committee of ALT. It was meeting on the 2nd November and had co-opted JH and ME and ML onto this body, which would be shaping future governance structures and plans.</p> <p>The Board questioned and commented on the general principle of maintaining the autonomy of the individual schools in the ALT and on exploring the potential to achieve efficiency savings and value for money on centrally procured services in a MAT structure. Furthermore, the costs to schools from budgets to support central services should be clarified. It was anticipated that if the Board was minded to convert to the ALT, this could take effect from February 2017. AL commented that in terms of future financial structures, ALT would give consideration to maintaining separate primary and secondary accounting systems for at least 18 months after the ALT was established.</p> <p>The Board was asked to mandate AL, as the project manager, to progress the necessary legal, financial and administrative processes with the DfE on behalf of John Mason Academy Trust (and the ALT).</p> <p>It was AGREED to progress due diligence, negotiations and activate the processes outlined above and to report back the outcomes to the S&A</p>	<p>Chair/AL</p>

Date of signing..... In the Chair.....



	Committee and the Board.	
12.	Policy review schedule for Trust Board policies	
	The Board had before them, the draft behaviour policy that had been recommended for approval by the CWA Committee. Subject to addressing comments concerning the role of students as ambassadors of the school when in uniform, and to partnerships with parents and the community with respect to drugs and alcohol concerns (which it was understood, were addressed by the school's planning statement and safeguarding policy respectively) the policy was ADOPTED .	MD
13.	Correspondence	
	There was no correspondence to report.	
14.	Any other business	
	SB thanked all the school's staff for their commitment and contributions to a hectic cycle of school evening events and activities during the first term. Attention was also drawn to the JM new school logo.	
15.	Date of next meeting	
	Thursday 8 th December 2016 at 5.30pm.	All
	The meeting ended at 7.28pm.	

Minutes drafted 14th Oct 16 12.00pm

Date of signing..... In the Chair.....