

DRAFT MINUTES
GREAT HEIGHTS ACADEMY TRUST
MAT BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

Monday 14th December 2020 (7.00 p.m) by Zoom

Present:

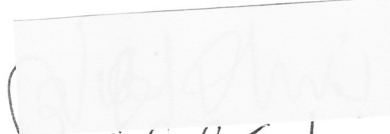
Mr C Midgley (Chair)	Mrs A Bennett (CEO)
Mr J Fryer	Dr A Birt
J Nellis	Mr K Inwood
Mr J Midgley	Mr J Power
Mr I Jaffar	In attendance: Clerk, COO, CFO

1. Apologies – E Flaxman.
2. Declaration of Interests – C Midgley, J Midgley and A Midgley (Raynville) are family.
3. Opening remarks and governance update
C Midgley provided feedback from the AGM earlier in the evening. Members appointed E Flaxman, I Jaffar and J Power as Trustees for four years w.e.f. 5th June 2020. They also approved the re-appointment of Simpson Wood and BHP for a further year.

The CEO acknowledged everyone’s support in a challenging Term, ensuring that schools remained open and that Bowling Green joined from 1st December. Overall, the MAT is in good shape and Trustees were thanked for volunteering for SIP visits and LGBs.

LGB at Carlinghow has now met successfully, observed by the COO, with a majority of Trust appointees. Bowling Green LGB will follow suit, once West Vale has a new Chair.
4. Minutes of 5th October & Matters Arising
Minutes approved for publication – to be signed by the Clerk on behalf of the Chair.

Communications and publicity: MAT/Academy websites and signage are now in place with a ‘corporate’ house style. The MAT core team will require additional resourcing to work alongside J Pascall, I Jaffar and Five Talents.
5. Approval of Annual Report and Accounts (from Finance & Premises Committee)
Trustees unanimously approved The Trust’s Annual Report and Accounts 2019-20, as recommended by both Trust Members and Finance & Premises Committee following a presentation by Simpson-Wood Accountants (Executive Summary circulated).
6. Correspondence, including ESFA
The Academies Financial Handbook is the key driver of Trust activities, but the Clerk had circulated DfE’s updated Governance Handbook (“**what has changed**”, pages 8-12; October 2020) along with their accompanying new guidance on governance roles (“*clear information relating to roles in trust governance, (for) inducting new volunteers or as refresher for more experienced trustees*”). There is an expectation of ‘keeping Members informed’ and Baroness Berridge had written to Trust Members in October 2020.
7. MAT reporting
The CEO Report was presented, with the focus having been on two main areas whilst monitoring any risks around attendance:


Carl Larkton Midgley
8/2/2021

- maintaining remote learning offers - including support for the most vulnerable families,
- catch-up plans - including alignment with renewed momentum on school improvement and emerging data (initially Yr2 Phonics scores).

School Improvement Partner visits (SIP) have taken place and were shadowed by Trustees for context. Bowling Green is a risk having just joined (1st December), but started its improvement journey with the Trust in April 2020. In summary, all five SIP visits confirm that the MAT schools remain on a 'journey' towards good or outstanding. This is also an opportunity to enhance the communications work; engaging and attracting parents especially early years. Performance Management has also been completed.

A question was asked on %age pupil attendance at Carlinghow in November and how those working remotely were followed up/accounted for.

The Chair of Standards reported that he had been impressed by all the schools during the SIP visits, with evidence of outstanding tracking and documentation. All were in a position to move forward, including Bowling Green which has tremendous potential. He acknowledged the support provided at all levels during the crisis and the willingness of all the schools to embrace joint process and procedures, through similar plans and tracking systems. The Trust Board agreed to send a 'thank you' letter and small gift to all staff in all schools. **A presentation on Seesaw for Trustees will follow in 2021.**

Financial reporting

The CFO reminded Trustees that the nature of academies is that documents reviewed at Finance & Premises Committee come to the Board for final approval. Management Accounts were shared which show that the total Trust revenue balance at end of year (current forecast) is £1,616,902, with an in year deficit of £196,970 (but 20/21 includes £146k on SCITT Premises; excluding this the in-year position would be £50k deficit).

The Chair of Finance confirmed that he continued to provide Trustees with assurance by meeting with the CFO between Board meetings, for prior scrutiny of the Annual Report & Accounts, the Management Accounts, internal and external scrutiny reports and Simpson Wood's supplementary letters, together with a watching brief on any challenges going forwards. There were approvals to escalate from F&P - in line with the financial scheme of delegation - as follows:

- TSC £50,156.49 (2019/2020 underspend)
- Catering supply (Leeds CC: extension of variation to contract in line with PPN 04)
- Six contracts funded by Teaching School Council (as specified in Agenda item 8.2c)

The Chair of Finance concluded by highlighting that Simpson Wood's management letter (accompanying the Annual Accounts) was the first D McAllister had seen in 12 years of school audit with no comments. This was a testament to the work of the CFO and team.

MAT Board approval was confirmed as follows:

- **GHAAT Annual Report and Accounts 2019-20**
- **Trust Management Accounts**
- **External scrutiny report (BHP; 8.2bi)**
- **Internal scrutiny report (review of 19-20, programme for 20-21; 8.2bii)**
- **Financial approvals, as above**

Standards report

The Chair of Standards confirmed that Standards Committee met twice in Autumn Term, with the additional meeting focusing on catch-up plans (Pupil Premium, PE, SDP, school improvement), the impact of COVID on attendance and on SEND/Safeguarding. Future outcomes had been decided as follows: reporting of maths; impact measures; use exemplars; bespoke proformas with fixed fields (to target/focus development plans). The CEO confirmed that School Development Plans were being re-written accordingly.

The committee had agreed to the CEO's proposal for a lead teacher (SEND) across the MAT - who the Chair had met subsequently on the Raynville SIP visit. An updated Pay Policy had been approved (no significant changes).

Policies approval

The updated Pay Policy (no substantial change) approved at Stds Committee was noted.

8. Standing Item - specific MAT Board decisions

Minutes of last meeting 5.10.20 - **approved**

GHAT Annual Report and Accounts 2019-20 - **approved**

Trust Management Accounts - **approved**

Internal / External scrutiny reports - **approved**

Financial approvals, as above – **approved**

9. AOB

Local Plan (Greetland) - the Clerk briefed Trustees on the outcome of the Local Plan Stage 2 Hearing, Matter 17 (filenote available). The rolling document CC85 ('Task List from the Inspector') should show any follow-up actions/documents in due course, www.calderdale.gov.uk/localplan.

10. Future Meetings

Confirmed: 8th February 2021 (Standards at 6pm / MAT Board 7pm, by Zoom).

Detailed arrangements tbc:

29th March 2021 (F&P/MAT), 24th May 2021 (Stds/MAT), 19th July 2021 (F&P/MAT)

AP CARLTON MCGREEVY
8/2/2021