East Midlands Academy Trust – Trust Board Meeting

23rd April 2021, 10:00am - Meeting to be conducted virtually via Teams

Fourth meeting of academic year 2020/2021

These minutes reflect the order of the agenda and not necessarily the order in which items were discussed.

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action
1. Welcome	**Present:** **Kevin Crompton** (EMAT: Trustee) **Fiona Wheeler** (EMAT: Trustee) **Ayo Salam** (EMAT: Trustee) *joined at 11.30am* **Andy Davis** (EMAT: Trustee) *joined at 11.10am* **Stephen Morales** (EMAT: Trustee) **David Houghton** (EMAT: Trustee) **Asvin Morjaria** (EMAT: Trustee) **Bernard Weiss** (EMAT: Member) **Joshua Coleman** (EMAT: CEO) **Paul Wheeler** (EMAT: COO) **Lorna Beard** (EMAT: Head of Safeguarding & Inclusion) **Giles Osborne** (EMAT: Lead Academy Improvement Partner) **Monica Juan** (EMAT: Head of Governance & Safeguarding)- Minutes KC welcomed all and reminded all present that the matters raised within this meeting would remain confidential until the minutes were agreed and signed off.	
2. Apologies	Apologies from **Leigh Jones** were received and accepted by the board.	
3. Quoracy	The meeting was confirmed as quorate.	
4. Declarations of Interest	KC declared that he had been appointed Interim Director of Education & Skills for Birmingham City Council. Trustees agreed that there were no conflicts of interests involved as the trust did not operate in the Birmingham area. There were no other declarations of interest pertaining to this agenda in addition to those already recorded on the annual Register of Interests.	
5. Minutes of TB meeting held on 11/12/2020 & 04/02/2021 & matters arising not in AL.	The minutes of the meetings held on the 11/12/2020 & 04/02/2021 were reviewed and agreed to be an accurate representation of the meetings. KC agreed to physically sign the minutes once lockdown restrictions had been lifted.	
6. Action Log from the meeting	1) Organise linking of trustees with academies - **ONGOING** 2) Write to LABs and ongoing Chairs -**ONGOING**	

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held on 11/12/2020 & 04/02/2021	3) Prepare KLOE update for next TB meeting - **DONE** 4) Send Expenses policy to trustees - **ONGOING** 5) PP to be added to next TB agenda. - **DONE** 6) Safeguarding audits report to be added to next TB agenda- **DONE** 7) Share DfE response and press comms with trustees - **DONE** 8) Organise BW appointment paperwork - **DONE**	
7. Safeguarding • **Audit reports** • **NIA update**	*Papers had been distributed with the agenda for this meeting.* **Audit reports:** LB reminded trustees that prior the NIA Ofsted visit, the trust was already planning to conduct 1 day safeguarding audits across all schools. However, following the Ofsted visit in December, it was acknowledged that a deeper safeguarding understanding was needed across the organization, particularly focusing on case notes and case workload. Therefore, some of the current AIPs had been commissioned to work on a four-part safeguarding audit tool to roll out across all academies. All safeguarding audits had been completed, which had resulted in a RAG rated safeguarding action plan for each school, clearly identifying any gaps in the organization. The audits had highlighted some historical SCR issues in some of the schools and interventions were already in place to minimize risk and ensure compliance. Without including the NIA, the audits had identified that all schools were compliant, with most schools rating at least Good. Trust wide, the following actions were already in place: 1. **Safeguarding Policy:** As the Safeguarding policy had been flagged as having inconsistencies, the trust had adopted the NCC model Safeguarding policy, with some minor adjustments to accommodate the MK schools. A working party was in place to create a new Safeguarding Trust policy ready for September 2021. 2. **Governance:** The audits had highlighted some weaknesses around governance monitoring which could impact of the Leadership and Management judgement during an inspection. To facilitate the monitoring and robust challenge for governors a yearly plan had been implemented, providing the necessary tools to conduct visits. There were plans to replicate this approach with SEND and PP to strengthen governance in all areas of inclusion. **3.** **Peer to peer assessment:** To strengthen practice, DSLs from different schools had taken part in the safeguarding audits across the trust. This sharing of best practice would be further developed into a peer-to-peer support to continue outside of the audit process. **4.** **Safeguarding audit 4-year cycle:** A safeguarding cycle over the next four years had been developed. This would ensure that each school would receive a deep dive review every two years with an interim review in between focusing around Personal files, SCR and 10% case files. **Trustees requested for the safeguarding summary form to be presented to trustees at each TB meeting for discussion.**	**Safeguarding summary form to each TB meeting**

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	Following LB report, trustees discussed extensively whether they felt confident that safeguarding was being successfully addressed across the organization. **In response to a question from a trustee regarding the day-to-day accountability of staff around safeguarding and what assurances could be provided to trustees that regular conversations were taking place between staff about children of concern and any processes followed** LB explained that since the Ofsted visit had been conducted there have been a shift in culture across the organization and all leaders were taking steps to ensure that their team members were accountable for the job they were supposed to do. In addition to this, LB had now access to MyConcern across all schools, so she was able to monitor cases closely. A program of random checks was in place to ensure that all actions were done timely. DSLs had been provided with extensive training and encouraged to use peer to peer support to ensure challenge, so they felt supported and more informed. Finally, the deep dives had included the review on 1 CP child, 1 Child in Need file plus 10% of all cases files, tracking all the actions and timescales. JC clarified that teams were having more regular weekly updates with leaders to share information and embed accountability with the information being cascaded to the rest of staff. The safeguarding trustee confirmed that a meeting with LB would take place the following week to look at how the new processes were being embedded and that she would report to trustees on any progress at the following meeting. **In response to a question from a trustee regarding how the trust was ensuring that staff were adequately performing their role** LB explained that assurances would be obtained from AIP monitoring, DSL line management, looking at trends and through the new governance monitoring cycle. **After a robust discussion trustees agreed to alter the proposed 4-year cycle to include a second full safeguarding review to be conducted across all schools within one year of the first one taking place, in order to ensure that any gaps had been fully identified and addressed. Following the second full review the normal 4-year cycle should resume as planned.** Trustees thanked LB for the extensive work done around safeguarding and praised the quality of paperwork presented. **NIA update:** JC reported to trustees that there had been no response to the letters sent to the RSC and ESFA and the TWN had not been published yet. Although the NCC had conducted a safeguarding audit at the school the report hadn't been released so far. The school was still facing from some turbulence; however, the HT was working hard with the staff embedding the changes presented in the Rapid Improvement Plan. *Please see confidential minute*	**Safeguarding 2nd full review to take place in spring 2022.**

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8. Updates from • **Audit & Risk** • **FHR & Estates** • **Standards & Performance**	*Committee Chairs gave a verbal update.* **A&R:** AM reported no issues for the internal Payroll Audit and some areas of improvement for the Recruitment & Talent audit which were expected. GDPR was the biggest concern. It was clear that the commitment to be compliant by the end of the financial year would not be possible. The DPO had been outsourced and the trust was looking to reach compliance by the end of 2021. The committee fully supported the actions taken so far and would review the situation in July to take the necessary steps to achieve the target. **In response to a question from a trustee regarding what the material risks were in the areas where the trust was not compliant** AM explained that at the time of the report, EvolveNorth had highlighted almost half of all GDPR aspects and considered the risk medium to high. PW clarified that several systems were now in place to mitigate these breaches and the journey to compliance was progressing steadily. These included: • New structures in place. • ICO confirmed that breaches had been dealt appropriately. • Training in place and ongoing. • DPO outsourced. • Policies in place. After a robust discussion trustees agreed that Evolve North should come back to review the trust position during the Autumn term and by December 2021 GDPR should not have any significant issues pending. **FHRE:** AD reported that all papers and policies presented to the committee had been scrutinised and approved. Trust finances were healthy. The Chair commended the presentations given to the committee by different departments and the quality of the papers distributed to trustees. **S&P:** There was no update as the Chair had sent her apologies.	**EvolveNorth report to be presented to A&R December meeting.**
9. CEO Report	*Papers had been distributed with the agenda for this meeting.* JC presented the highlights of the paper and took questions from Trustees. **In response to a question from a trustee regarding whether KPIs were in track to be completed by the end of the academic year** LB explained that the RAG rating showed in green those actions fully embedded. Amber showed actions still ongoing. COVID had had some effect on the progression of those actions, particularly around curriculum and therefore some of the KPIs were still rated amber. **In response to a question from a trustee regarding whether Shepherdswell was a concern** GO confirmed that as the Ofsted window was fast approaching, ample support and resources had been deployed to assist the school and staff in order to secure a successful grading.	

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	In response to a question from a trustee regarding pupils' school readiness and whether this was a direct result from the pandemic JC explained that COVID had impacted EY greatly, particularly around development, with some children regressing as they had not experienced the attention and support they would normally had obtained if they were in school. In addition, there was an increasing number of children around Nursery and Reception age missing some of their key milestones, as they hadn't had access to health care visitors, while others had not gained any pre-school playgroup experience, therefore lacking basic social interaction skills. PW gave an update on the development of Pyramus House. The first floor would go through a refurbishment to host a CPD training centre for staff. This was in line with the trust long term strategy to become a teaching school. A paper had been shared with trustees outlining the proposed central team new structure, including the roles allocated to the new CPD training facilities. **In response to a question from a trustee regarding the relationship between accountability and performance and how it linked to the size of the central team and the trust operating model,** JC explained that overall accountability for the performance of the organisation rested with the CEO with clear lines of accountability across the central team. Heads would be responsible for the performance of their schools, with full support from the central team. Resources were provided mostly in-house with some sourced externally if expertise and/or capacity within the trust were not available. SM reassured trustees that, in comparison with other MATs across the country, the size of the central team and its allocated resources was proportionate. Trustees thanked the CEO for the comprehensive report.	
10. Finance matters: **•School Resource Management Toolkit**	*Papers had been distributed with the agenda for this meeting for information only.* PW confirmed that the information had been submitted to the DfE. Trustees thanked PW for the report.	
11. Pupil Premium Update	*Papers had been distributed with the agenda for this meeting.* LB presented the highlights. Daniel Sobel was chairing the PP forum and was working closely with the PP champions of each school, collating hard and soft DATA and looking at ways to track individual DATA moving forward. **In response to a question from a trustee regarding whether the trust had to report PP information in a different way** GO confirmed that the DfE had released a new standard report, which had to be in place by September 2021. The new format would make easier for parents to understand the information and would link to EEF research. The trust was currently using a similar format so the change would not present issues for the schools.	

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	Regarding the KLOE, GO gave a verbal update and explained that moving forward, AIPs would produce a report for each school to enable trustees to monitor their progress. There were no further questions from trustees. *LB and GO left the meeting at 11:48am*	
12. HAT merger update	*JC and PW gave a verbal update.* JC explained that currently the RSC would not support a merger between EMAT and HAT albeit not having another sustainable plan for them. QED trust had confirmed again that they were not prepared to take HAT under their wing. PW clarified that the LA was unable to close the school as they could not rehouse the students elsewhere. PW had attended a meeting with RSC staff to provide several pieces of information that had been requested, including a 5-year plan backed with ICFPs and a recovery plan. **In response to a question from a trustee regarding the reasons for the RSC opposition to the merger** the Chair explained that distance between the schools had been a factor alongside with the recent NIA turbulences. **In response to a question from a trustee regarding the support provided to HAT and for how long would remain in place** PW explained that EMAT was providing ringfenced support in the following areas: HR support around recruitment and SCR, Finance support around accounts, management assistance and information around IT and Estates, School Effectiveness support and Payroll. All assistance had been provided free of charge until the end of April and provision had been put in place to recover any incremental costs. Trustees were keen to point out that although the work with HAT had demonstrated that EMAT was able to successfully support another school, if the merger was not to happen the relationship should evolve moving forward. **Trustees discussed at length the support strategy and agreed that from September onwards, if there was no agreement with the RSC, the trust would phase out the support provided until December and charge full commercial rates on any services delivered.** Trustees requested a short paper to be presented at the July TB meeting, clarifying the next move with HAT so trustees could fully discuss the viability on any proposal moving forward.	**PW to present HAT paper.**
13. Governance Update	*Papers had been distributed with the agenda for this meeting.* Trusteed praised the quality of papers presented.	

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	Trustees unanimously agreed to approve the new Scheme of Delegation and new LAB ToR. **Trustees unanimously agreed to join the CST**	**MJ to distribute papers to LABs.** **MJ to organise subscription and links to updates**
14. Policies ratification	*All policies had been distributed with the agenda for this meeting for information only as they had been already ratified.* • Admissions 2022/23 • Whistleblowing 2021/22 • Safeguarding Policy 2020/21 • COVID19 addendum (latest) MJ informed trustees that a statement around 'Everyone's invited' had been added to all relevant policies. The whistleblowing information had been highlighted.	**MJ to upload policies to all EMAT websites.**
15. Next Agenda items	• HAT paper for debate • Safeguarding summary page for information	
16. AOB –	Evidence of the COVID19 FSM claim was shared on the screen for information. MJ informed trustees that the NIA had started consultation on the length of the school day.	
17. Board membership	BW confirmed he wished to stay as trustee. MJ informed that Joan Martin had offered her resignation as Member. *KC left the meeting at 12:24pm* *AD chaired the meeting from this point* **KC –reappointment: Trustees unanimously agreed to reappoint KC as a trustee for another term and expressed their gratitude for his services to the trust.**	**MJ to update KC details**
18. Dates of next meetings	Dates of meetings to July 2021: • Wednesday 21st July 2021 at 10am	**Calendar appointments have been sent**

Meeting closed at 12.29pm

Signed by Kevin Crompton, Chair of Trustees

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Date……

East Midlands Academy Trust

Action Log of the Trust Board meeting held on 23.04 2021. Meeting conducted virtually.

Item	Action	Owner
1.	Safeguarding summary form to be submitted at each TB meeting	LB
2.	Organise Safeguarding 2nd full review to take place in spring 2022.	LB
3.	EvolveNorth GDPR report to be presented at A&R December meeting.	PW/DU
4.	HAT viability paper to be presented at July meeting	PW
5.	MJ to distribute papers to LABs.	MJ
6.	Organise CST subscription and links to updates	MJ
7.	Upload ratified policies to website	MJ
8.	Update KC reappointment details	MJ

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