



MINUTES OF TRUST BOARD MEETING

Date: Wednesday 2nd October 2024
 Time: 10.00am
 Venue: Laurus Trust – Boardroom

Clerk: N Burgess
 Present: J Crawford, R Kumar, T Little, D Brown, L Woolley, S McGill, D Woolley, M Vevers, A Gilmour, C Nevin, W Mason, L Magrath, G Turnpenney and D Kershaw

Action		Initials
1	Trustees to inform the Clerk of any changes to their register of business interests	All
1	The Clerk to send the link for Safeguarding training to Trustees	NB
1	Trustees to complete Safeguarding training module	All
2	Previous measures to be added to the Trust report card	MV
2	Trustees are asked to read the KCSiE guidance	All
2	To discuss a sustainable level of reserves at the next meeting	All
2	CFO to update Trustees on the potential of another secondary school joining the Trust	LM

Agenda – Part 1

Category	Item	Notes	Action	
1	Governance Arrangements	Apologies	There were no apologies for this meeting.	
		AOB items	There were no other items of business which were not included in the agenda for this meeting.	
		Declarations of conflicts of interest in any of the agenda items	There were no declarations of interest in any of the agenda items.	
		Compliance	The Register of Business Interests was circulated and Trustees were asked to notify the Clerk of any changes to their record	All
		Minutes of the last Trust Board meeting	Minutes of the meeting held 3 rd July 2024 were approved as a correct record of the meeting and there were no matters arising which would not be covered in the agenda for this meeting.	
		Scheme of Delegation	Trustees confirmed the Scheme of Delegation as there were no changes to record.	

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		Terms of Reference	Terms of Reference for Trust Board and all committee meetings were confirmed.
		Trust Board committee membership/succession planning	<p>Trustees were informed that the DfE Advisory board had given approval for a Stockport LA Primary school to join the Laurus Trust, subject to due diligence.</p> <p>The approval does come with a condition, which is that the Trust makes a commitment and provide a date by which it will move to having no employees (other than potentially the CEO) on the Trust Board, as strongly recommended by paragraph 1.22 of the Academies Trust handbook. This is to ensure the Trust Board is sufficiently independent.</p> <p>To meet this condition, the Trust would also need to review and update the Articles of Association, as these currently require the CFO to be a Trustee.</p> <p>It was noted that the terms of office of D Brown and L Woolley were coming to an end in the coming weeks, and that both would not be re-elected. Both would continue to attend Trust Board meetings in their capacity as members of the Executive Team.</p> <p>Trustees discussed the vacancy of Chair of Audit and Risk Committee and a Trustee to be a member of the Pay and Remuneration Committee.</p> <p>It was <u>agreed</u> that J Crawford be appointed as Chair of Audit and Risk and S McGill to join Pay and Remuneration committee.</p> <p>Thanks were recorded to J Crombleholme for all her time and commitment given to the Trust.</p>
		Link Trustee roles and responsibilities	<p>Trustees updated on their Link roles.</p> <p><u>Maths – A Gilmour</u> Last meeting had been held in July at Priestnall School, to be able to see the integration of the school into the Trust. It was going well and any issues which required attention would be resolved in this new academic year. Free Maths training had been delivered to help support advanced students.</p> <p><u>English – C Nevin</u> The next meeting has been arranged for after the half term break.</p>

			<p><u>Science – R Kumar</u> A meeting will be arranged in the coming weeks.</p> <p><u>CEIAG – R Kumar</u> The focus is with outside agencies and companies. There is training in place for Careers Leads across the Trust. Trustees discussed how the Apprenticeship Levy can be utilised for training. It was also discussed how to expose the children to the opportunities which are available to them.</p> <p><u>MFL – S McGill</u> A visit to Priestnall had taken place in September. The results had been pleasing and the take up of MFL as an option had increased on the previous year. Year 7 are taught as in other Trust schools and will take their MFL GCSE in year 9.</p> <p>The gap to A Level from year 9 was discussed and keeping up language in context by attending a trip to France.</p> <p>The Languages Hub was also discussed and the experience and resources this brings. This is a 2-year programme.</p> <p><u>Humanities – D Kershaw</u> There is no feedback to report at this meeting.</p> <p><u>Culture, Creativity and Rhetoric – T Little</u> HE oversees the Apertura programme across the Trust. The Apertura conference, held in June 2024, was a success and will be held again this year. The use of AI in essay writing had been discussed.</p> <p>It was noted that MV and DW had met to discuss AI from a safeguarding perspective and were watching and monitoring closely. Exams in school are handwritten and phones and smartwatches are not allowed. Coursework was discussed as an area which could be a potential issue, but staff know the students and their work well and could identify any issues.</p> <p>The first musical production of Frozen was taking place at Priestnall this week.</p> <p><u>Sporting Excellence – W Mason</u> One student from the Elite Pathway had gone on to study at Loughborough University.</p> <p>Funding was received from LFET for a link programme</p>	
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			<p>with Manchester City with Laurus Ryecroft Sixth Form students. This is for an academic offer for talented footballers, in partnership with MCFC. This is an exciting opportunity for our students. Thanks were offered to E Haslam for his work in helping to secure the funding.</p> <p><u>Safeguarding – T Little</u> TL and DB had met in the summer term and completed safeguarding checks including a review of the SCR. A meeting will be arranged for the next half term.</p> <p><u>SEND – G Turnpenney</u> A meeting has not yet taken place this term but GT will be meeting M Sackville-Ford and visiting Laurus Grace once the school is open to students.</p> <p><u>PSHE – J Crawford</u> The introduction to PSHE is ongoing with H Bowe. JC has already visited lessons at Laurus Ryecroft and also Hazel Grove High School. A primary school visit is planned for this term and then a further follow up meeting with H Bowe.</p> <p><u>Primary – vacancy</u> Trustees are asked to speak to TL if they are interested in becoming the Link Trustee for the primary sector.</p>	
		Polices for approval	There were no policies for approval at this meeting.	
		Code of Conduct	Trustees agreed to adhere to the Code of Conduct.	
		Laurus Institute Governance area	<p>Trustees’ attention was drawn to the updated Governor and Trustee training area on the Laurus Institute site.</p> <p>Trustees are asked to complete the Safeguarding module as soon as possible and the Clerk will circulate the link to the training.</p>	NB
2	Vision, Ethos and Strategy	Trust Vision, Strategy, Culture and Values	<p>The updated Trust Development Plan was circulated prior to the meeting. The plan is in the final year of a 3-year cycle. There are no major changes to note.</p> <p>As requested a the last meeting a Trust Report card sample was circulated to add context and to allow Trustees to monitor progress against objectives.</p> <p>Feedback was requested from Trustees on the usefulness of the document. Trustees felt the document was very useful and requested previous measures be included to allow for comparison.</p>	MV

		<p>Trust Safeguarding Strategy, Policy and Practice with regard to statutory guidance</p>	<p>DB presented to Trustees the key changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2024 guidance.</p> <p>The document is the basis for safeguarding provision in all of our schools.</p> <p>Key updates include:</p> <p>Children attending alternative provision are still the responsibility of the school and safeguarding checks should regularly take place to check their welfare, progress and attendance</p> <p>Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online</p> <p>Follow up on unexplained and/or persistent absence</p> <p>Support for children in cases of domestic violence, where they see, hear or experience its effects. All schools are part of Operation Encompass.</p> <p>Trustees are asked to read the KCSiE guidance in full following this meeting.</p> <p>Trustees reviewed the Safeguarding Strategy alongside the Trust Safeguarding policy. Each school also has their own specific Safeguarding policy.</p>	<p>All</p>
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		<p>Trust Board Committee Chair updates</p>	<p><u>Governance, Oversight and Standards</u> The next meeting of this committee will be held immediately after this meeting.</p> <p><u>Finance and Resources</u> SM Updated on the meeting which had taken place on 5th July.</p> <p>The dates of the meetings have been changed for this academic year to enable the recommendation of the budget for approval to the full Trust Board.</p> <p>WM had circulated a budget update to Trustees by email on 15th August regarding the budget impact post the teachers pay award announcement. The email stated that the BFR position, showing a balanced budget for the year 31st August 2025, presented in July Trust Board meeting, and the F&R July meeting was unchanged. A Trustee had raised a question about the Core Schools Budget Grant not being fully funded. It was explained that this was due to the grant calculation being based on pupil numbers as at 31st October 2023, rather than on teacher numbers. Therefore, the approval of the budget for 31st August 2024 was taken at the F&R meeting in July.</p> <p>Trustees offered their thanks to WM and LM for their work around the budget setting and ensuring the Trust remains financially sustainable ongoing.</p> <p>Trustees discussed the need to debate on a sustainable level of Reserves at a future meeting, and also at a F&R meeting.</p> <p>ZG – Trust Director of Marketing and Communications attended to present to Trustees around brand guidelines and standardisation across the Trust, the promotion of our schools and the challenges and successes. Marketing are also working closely with HR around recruitment strategies.</p>	<p>All</p>
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		<p>Admissions policies 2026/2027</p>	<p>WM circulated a summary document of the Admissions policies prior to the meeting.</p> <p>There are 19 policies with no changes and no consultation period required.</p> <p>The Admissions policy for Laurus Grace will be referred back to a future meeting as this is still under review.</p> <p>Trustees <u>approved</u> the Admissions policies for 2026-2027.</p>	
		<p>Trust Growth</p>	<p>In September Crown Street Primary school had opened and Hazel Grove Primary School joined the Trust.</p> <p>Laurus Grace will be opening to students after half term. Students are admitted via the Stockport LA referral system. It is anticipated that student numbers will increase and will be accommodated in temporary buildings until the permanent building is completed.</p> <p>Leaders are currently undertaking due diligence on a Stockport primary school who have been approved to join the Trust. There has also been expressions of initial interest from a number of other primary schools.</p> <p>In terms of growth in the secondary sector there has been an initial approach to take on another Stockport secondary school. The DfE feel that the school would be a good fit for the Trust and an initial meeting has been arranged for the week following this meeting. A long discussion took place and it was noted that in terms of school improvement this would be a big project for the Trust and capacity was discussed. Trustees agreed to progress with the initial discussions further and to proceed with caution. LM commented that following the meeting, if necessary, a sub group of Trustees would be needed to look at due diligence. An update will be given at the next Trust Board meeting.</p> <p>Q – In terms of Laurus Grace, if the school has 24 spaces but is not full, how is this funded? A – There is baseline funding per student, up to a maximum of 40 students in temporary accommodation. There is no top up funding if students are not there. It was noted that there is a demand for places within the LA.</p>	<p>LM</p>

3	Educational performance and staff performance management	Production and analysis of educational data	<p>DW presented the headline results from all schools in the Trust.</p> <p>Trustees reviewed the outcomes for KS1 which pupils undertake at the end of year 2. KS1 national tests are no longer statutory.</p> <p>Q – What is the reason for some of the dips in greater depth? A – this can be due to the SEND profile of certain cohorts, and also due to EAL variability.</p> <p>For KS2 our schools build over a longer term and put early strategies in place from KS1 upwards.</p> <p>Trustees were pleased to note the outcomes for KS2 at GBPS. It was also noted that next year there would be KS2 outcomes for pupils at CHPS and HGPS.</p> <p>KS3 MFL outcomes were reviewed by Trustees. The results are excellent across the Trust, and are based on Spanish, French and German GCSEs.</p> <p>Q – What is the impact of the table of comparison across the schools on staff? A – It is really positive. They really appreciate being able to see what is being achieved and this allows cross trust collaboration and also healthy competition.</p> <p>Q – Why, as the results are so good, is the uptake of languages at KS4 not so high? A – Studying a second language at GCSE is higher than national average. Some of our students choose not to take a second language but then pick up their language again at A Level. We offer a bridging unit to bridge the gap between year 9 and A Level.</p> <p>RK commented that a strength of the Trust is the ability to transfer the culture to all of our schools.</p> <p>Trustees were delighted to review the KS4 and KS5 outcomes for all schools across the Trust.</p> <p>Year 13 destinations were reviewed by Trustees. This year at CHSF a record 13 students, from a cohort of 150, had gone on to study medicine.</p> <p>Q – In terms of destinations where are students opting to study? A – In previous years it has been more Liverpool, Sheffield and Leeds but this year students are moving</p>
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			further afield, including Durham and Edinburgh.	
		Trust approach to policies for curriculum and assessment	LM confirmed the Trust approach to policies for curriculum and assessment.	
		Approach to staff appointment, dismissal, appraisal and performance management	LM also confirmed the Trust approach to staff appointment, dismissal, appraisal and performance management.	

4	Financial performance	Changes to Academy Trust Handbook- CFO	<p>WM delivered an update to Trustees on the key changes to the Academy Trust Handbook for 2024.</p> <p>There have been 6 key changes, with some recommendations as guidance.</p> <p>Cyber security – this is a risk which is high on the Trust Risk Register and which leaders are spending a significant amount of time and resources on.</p> <p>Q – Is there a policy in place for ransom attack? A – We would need to go to the DfE for guidance and, as specified in the ATH, we cannot have our own policy.</p> <p>EV Salary sacrifice – this is something for which approval would need to be sought, but which the Trust are not considering at present.</p> <p>Reserves – we are currently consistent with other Trusts, 5% is specified in our Reserves policy. The DfE do not set a specified level, this is set by the Trust. The level of reserves has been identified as a discussion for a future meeting.</p> <p>Internal Scrutiny – it is not sufficient to simply have a peer-to-peer review, and this should be done by a third party professional. This is already in place at Laurus Trust.</p> <p>Finance leases – a change is approval is not required from DfE.</p> <p>Notice to improve – this could be due to a failure to maintain the estate. This is a response to issues caused by RAAC. As a Trust we cannot be responsible for issues prior to academisation in 2012, due to aging buildings.</p> <p>Trustees thanked WM for the very helpful summary of the changes.</p>	
5	AOB	AOB	<p>The Governor and Trustee Conference will be held on Wednesday 4th December from 9.00 – 10.30am.</p>	

6	Meeting dates	Meeting dates to note:	TBM2 – Wednesday 4 th December 2024 at 10.30am TBM3 – Wednesday 12 th February 2025 at 10.00am TBM4 – Wednesday 7 th May 2025 at 10.00am TBM5 – Wednesday 9 th July 2025 at 10.00am Please could Trustees advise the Clerk, at the earliest opportunity, if they are unable to attend a meeting.	
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Impact of Meeting / Key Outcomes
Trustees reviewed the Board and committee membership
Trustees updated on their Link Visits
TDP and Trust Report card were reviewed by Trustees
DB presented the key changes to KCSiE guidance
Chair of Finance and Resources gave a verbal overview of the last meeting
Trustees approved the Admissions policies for 2026-2027
CEO updated Trustees on growth opportunities
DW presented the headline results for all schools in the Trust
CFO presented to Trustees the changes to the Academy Trust Handbook for 2024

Meeting closed at 12.05pm



T Little
 Chair of Trust Board
 04.12.2024