



MINUTES OF TRUST BOARD MEETING

Date: Wednesday 4th December 2024
 Time: 10.30am
 Venue: Laurus Trust – Boardroom

Clerk: N Burgess
 Present: L Woolley, A Gilmour, T Little, R Kumar, G Turnpenney, J Crawford, D Woolley, M Vevers, D Kershaw, C Nevin, D Brown, L Magrath, W Mason and J Peet for part of the meeting
 Observers: S Mellor, P Jones and S Wheatley

	Action	Initials
1	Notify the Clerk of any changes to Register of Business Interests	All
1	Complete Safeguarding training	All
2	To circulate Compare Schools Performance data	LM
2	To further update on the school potentially joining the Trust	LM/LW

Agenda – Part 1				
Category	Item	Notes	Action	
1	Governance Arrangements	Apologies	Apologies were received and accepted from S McGill.	
		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 2 nd October 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.	

		Trust Board committee membership/succession planning	<p>L Woolley and D Brown are no longer Trustees after their terms of office came to an end. Both will still attend meetings in their capacity as members of the Executive Team.</p> <p>Subject to approval by Members at the AGM S Mellor will be appointed as a Trustee.</p> <p>T Little updated Trustees in that he was also speaking to another potential Trustee following this meeting.</p> <p>L Magrath as CEO was reappointed on to the Trust Board as is now recommended as good practice.</p>	
		Polices for approval	<p>Trustees approved the following policies:</p> <p>Anti-Bullying policy Appraisal policy Appropriate Policy document Attendance (primary) policy Behaviour and Anti-Bullying (primary) policy BTecs policies and procedures CCTV policy Child on Child abuse policy CPD Complaints policy CPD Malpractice and Administration policy Data Breach policy Data Protection policy Exams policy Fit to Study policy FOI policy with publication scheme Harmful Sexual Behaviours (secondary) policy Low Level Concerns policy Medical Conditions in Schools policy Non-examined Assessments policy Online Safety policy Post Exams Results policy Records Managements policy Review of Marking policy Safeguarding policy Secondary Employment policy Use of a Word Processor in examinations policy</p>	
		Laurus Institute Governance area	<p>The agenda for this meeting contains the link to the Laurus Institute training page for Trustees ease of access. Trustees are reminded to complete the Safeguarding training at their earliest convenience.</p>	All

2	Vision, Ethos and Strategy	Trust Board Committee Chair updates	<p><u>Governance, Oversight and Standards 02.10.2024</u> C Nevin gave a verbal update of the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed the membership of the AC committees and noted the need to address the matter of diversity – ethnic and social to better reflect the demographic each school. On-going work • Met with N Thompson the Chair of Laurus Cheadle Hulme covering a range of topics including membership, induction and recruitment • Reviewed the heat map drawn from the previous analysis of CST Assurance framework. • No specific Governor training needs other than to ensure Safeguarding training is kept up to date. Each AC to look at its local needs in deciding on any specific training requirements. This would be covered again at the termly Zoom meetings with the AC Chairs • The clerking arrangements were noted and which it appears that NB is currently covering all Academy Committees, but help is over the horizon and additional support will be provided over the next few months • The termly lunch time Team Meetings with AC Chairs proves a useful forum and will continue. A regular feature of the meeting is a brief presentation from a member of the Central services team so that AC Chairs may understand how it relates to and supports the role and work of the Academy Committee <p><u>Pay and Remuneration 06.11.2024</u> G Turnpenney gave a verbal update of the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S McGill had replaced J Crombleholme as a member of the committee • Trustees had provided challenge and scrutiny to the recommendations given by Heads of School and were happy to approve the recommendations • Pay awards were approved: 5.5% for teachers, and £1290 for support staff up to point 44, and 2.5% for points above 44 • Living wage of £12.60 was approved with effect from 1st April 2025 • Trustees noted the retirement of an Assistant Headteacher at Priestnall and the resignation of the Head of School at CHPS • Trustees approved the Pay Policy 	
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed the Gender Pay Gap report • Noted benchmarking for CEO pay <p><u>Finance and Resources 07.11.2024</u></p> <p>In the absence of the Chair WM updated Trustees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed and approved the changes to the Trust Finance Manual • Financial Scheme of Delegation was approved • Methodology for SCA was approved • Reviewed the Reserves policy • Cleaning contract tender is due for renewal in March 2025 • Capital approval, with external funding, was approved for design stage works at DHS and also LCH/CHPS • Received the Sports Centre report • IT Director presented the IT Development Plan including cyber security • In terms of Reserves DK and TL to meet A Law to discuss 	
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		Link Trustee roles and responsibilities	<p>Trustees updated on their Link roles.</p> <p><u>Maths – A Gilmour</u> The next meeting will be taking place on Friday 6th December.</p> <p><u>English – C Nevin</u> CN had recently met and the discussion had centred around results and future plans.</p> <p><u>Science – R Kumar</u> There is currently no visit to report on.</p> <p><u>CEIAG – R Kumar</u> There is currently no visit to report on.</p> <p><u>MFL – S McGill</u> There is currently no visit to report on.</p> <p><u>Humanities – D Kershaw</u> There is currently no visit to report on.</p> <p><u>Culture, Creativity and Rhetoric – T Little</u> TL had recently met with H Eckhardt with a focus on adjusting the offer programmes ongoing and the plans for the year.</p> <p><u>Sporting Excellence – W Mason</u> The Trust are pleased to announce the link with the MCFC Partnership for Laurus Ryecroft Academic football pathway. This is a 5 year programme from September 2025. This programme also benefits from LFET funding and thanks were offered to A Law.</p> <p><u>Safeguarding – T Little</u> TL will be meeting with D Brown following this meeting.</p> <p><u>SEND – G Turnpenney</u> GT had recently visited Laurus Grace and had a tour of the school. It was found to be a very positive and welcoming environment. GT had observed a Biology lesson for 4 students and an Art lesson for 2 students. The school currently has capacity for 24 students (there are currently 11 students) and this will increase to 80 on completion of the new build.</p> <p><u>PSHE – J Crawford</u> There is currently no visit to report on.</p> <p><u>Primary – vacancy</u></p>	
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			It is proposed that this vacancy will be filled by one of the new Trustee appointments.	
		Record of visits completed since last meeting	<p>There have been 5 records of visits completed since the last meeting:</p> <p>Academic Enhancement Culture Creativity & Rhetoric English MFL SEND</p>	

		<p>Theme: Recognised for Excellence</p> <p>Priority: Government, Stakeholders and influencers</p> <p>Priority: Parents, carers, students and pupils</p> <p>Priority: Our schools and potential members of our Trust community</p>	<p>Trustees reviewed the priority, ambitions and indicators of success for being recognised for excellence.</p> <p>The document updates the progress made towards the theme for the past and current academic years.</p> <p>There have been a number of SUMAN visits arranged to link British and Chinese education and it is good to be recognised in this area.</p> <p><u>School to School Support</u> The Trust have been approached by a range of schools to support in varied curriculum areas: 2 schools in Oldham – providing Maths and English – work is ongoing to Easter 2025 A school in Cheshire – providing a range of support, including coaching a new Headteacher A Catholic Trust providing MFL support and also in Tameside In Glossop and Poynton approaches have been received to support in Maths</p> <p>LM has been invited to attend the Building Bridges Partnership. This programme involves one week in London and one week visiting schools in Singapore.</p> <p>Q – It is good for our own people to have this development but do we have capacity? How do we co-ordinate? A – D Woolley is the co-ordinator. There are some areas where we would be unable to take on any more school to school support projects but we have capacity in other areas. We would look at each request individually.</p> <p>L Woolley and D Woolley are both serving Ofsted Inspectors and D Brown is Chair of Stockport Secondary Heads Consortium.</p> <p>M Vevers will be seconded to the RISE programme for 2 days per week, with a caveat that this would terminate if it affected Trust capacity too much.</p> <p>The TDP was circulated prior to the meeting. There have been no updates since the last meeting but the plan is shared for information. Sections of the plan will be reviewed as an agenda item at each meeting.</p> <p>The revised Trust Scorecard was circulated with the meeting papers. There is data included as requested,</p>	
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			<p>but the IDSR is not due to be published until January 2025.</p> <p>The “Compare Schools Performance” data is due to be updated later in the week of this meeting. LM will circulate to Trustees. The Score Card will be updated on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>The Heatmap circulated will be part of the TBM4 self-evaluation meeting on a biannual basis. It is a summary of the full Trust Assurance Framework tool.</p> <p>Q – How do we refer back to the document? A – This will be done at Governance, Oversight and Standards committee meetings.</p> <p><u>CEO update</u> LM circulated the secondary numbers for admission to year 7 in September 2025. All Trust schools are oversubscribed. Trustees noted that last year there were a number of appeals for places which took place over a number of days. DB commented that members of the Admissions team had visited CHHS and were astounded at how busy the school is at lesson changeover time.</p> <p>For primary places the application deadline is 16th January 2025.</p> <p>Trustees were pleased to see the amazing testament of parent faith in our Laurus Trust schools.</p> <p>In terms of the primary school who have voted to join the Trust, the educational and non-education due diligence has now been completed. There is work to be done with staff and parents to engage with the process. Trustees gave their consent to go-ahead and complete some work around staff voice and to bring back to the next Trust Board meeting.</p> <p>Q – How did the approach for the school to join the Trust come about? A – Chair of Governors approached the Trust in Summer 2024. Due to the changes in the conversion grant funding the school moved quickly and the non-educational due diligence was completed later. There were some issues raised in the due diligence process which required further information and clarification. It was noted there were no concerns from an educational perspective.</p>	LM
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			<p>Q – Is that unusual for the Chair of Governors to make the initial approach? A-No not at all, it would normally be the Chair of Governors who made initial contact.</p> <p>Q- What do Stockport LA think? A – The school is no issue to the LA as they are a school of choice in the area and have good outcomes for the pupils.</p> <p>Trustees approved to progress and to bring further information back to the sub group.</p> <p>Q – What would be the impact on Trust finances if the school were to join, considering the information you have? A – The RSC say that the school fits with our growth strategy, it is a two-form entry and a feeder school to one of our secondaries. The Trust would get SCA funding overtime to be able to pay for essential works such as roofs or fire alarms.</p> <p>It was noted that if the school did join the Trust there would need to be increased capacity within the Central Services team.</p> <p>LM asked Trustees what they would like to see in terms of growth. A long discussion took place and Trustees confirmed they would like the Trust to grow whilst acknowledging that at present the only opportunities were within the primary sector. One Trustee commented that growth is right but the financial impact must be known. Another Trustee confirmed yes to growth, but it has to be the right growth.</p> <p>It was agreed to progress further with the school potentially joining the Trust and refer back to at future meetings. A sub group was convened of JC, DK, AG and GT.</p>	LM/LW
		Agree auditing and reporting arrangements for matters of compliance	<p>The agenda for the Audit and Risk meeting was shared with Trustees for information.</p> <p>The next Audit and Risk meeting is Friday 6th December.</p>	

		Review and monitor Trust Risk Register	The Risk Register will be reviewed at the Audit and Risk meeting and be referred back to the Trust Board.	
		Confirm Autumn School Census has been completed in all Trust schools	It was confirmed that the Autumn School Census had been completed and submitted for all Trust schools.	

3	Educational performance and staff performance management	Careers Guidance – statutory requirements	<p>J Peet attended to present Careers Guidance in Trust schools to Trustees.</p> <p>There are currently 3.5 Careers Advisors working across the Trust. Trustees were advised to follow the school’s social media channels to see the wealth of opportunities and information available to the students and the meaningful encounters with employers.</p> <p>Careers Guidance at Laurus Trust is based on the Gatsby Bench mark which is nationally agreed with set outcomes for schools. The nationally agreed framework allows leaders to be measure progress. The document circulated at the meeting reflected the progress being made by the Trust. It was noted that the area which is most challenging is engaging with employers. It was agreed that the engagement must be meaningful for students rather than just exposure.</p> <p>Q – What about benchmark 3? A – We have been harsh on ourselves, are we ensuring we are representative of all categories of students, for example FSM, PP, gender?</p> <p>Trustees also reviewed current destination data for the cohort of 2024. The information was gained from speaking to students and the figures could change with the data which is due to be published imminently. A steady increase in Apprenticeships was noted.</p> <p>Trustees also reviewed the curriculum statement for CEIAG. The document reflects the foundation the curriculum is built on and is planned the same as any other curriculum subject. The aim is to “open the door to the future of their choice”. Trustees noted that all of the documents reviewed were published on the school websites.</p> <p>Q – Do we use the destination data to inform what we do? A- A good example is Apprenticeships, if the national average is 15 and we have 5% are we giving students the right advice? Another example is in our local area is another college attracting our students? Do we invite them in?</p> <p>Q – How many students intend to go on to A Levels and also what is the retention rate for staying in the Trust? A – Some of our students go on to do BTec and not A Levels. We look at retention anecdotally and review accordingly. There is a strong number of students who</p>
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			<p>stay at the Trust to complete their A Level studies. Students still in education or training is good at 98% but we also ask ourselves have we done enough to equip the students to then stay in their chosen education or training.</p> <p>Q – Do we have data for our Sixth Form destination as not all will go on to University?</p> <p>A – Currently we only have data for CHHS but this will change in Summer of 2025 when we will also have HGHS, DHS and LR. The data is a snapshot of where our students go and we also have external students who join the Trust to complete their 16-18 Sixth Form education. We do not have any further access to data to be able to track once the students have left their college provider. NEET figures are low and the data we receive is from the LA.</p> <p>Q – Are you finding it more difficult to engage employers?</p> <p>A – Not at present. We are finding employers wish to engage but the numbers we are able to facilitate are a challenge.</p> <p>A number of years ago it was a national requirement for students in year 10 to complete work experience. This would be a big challenge now due to safeguarding. We are trialling a number of new ideas, including parents taking their child to work on the June Inset day to gain experience. Sixth Form students do complete work experience and there is also the Life After Laurus programme. Work experience can be a challenge to arrange and co-ordinate placements for 300 students. We are of the agreement that a work experience placement should be meaningful experience for students.</p>	
		SEND Code of Practice	<p>G Turnpenney, as Link Trustee for SEND, confirmed to Trustees that the Trust applies and adheres to the SEND Code of Practice.</p> <p>The Code of Practice applies from 0-25 and also beyond school and education.</p> <p>Trustees thanks GT for all her work on SEND at the Trust.</p>	

		Support for Looked After Children	<p>Provision for LAC (Looked After Children) and PLAC (Previously Looked After Children) was presented to Trustees.</p> <p>LAC is dependent on a care order awarded by the Courts. A LAC could still be placed with their parents. Additional provisions are in place for these children to ensure their needs are met.</p> <p>Q – How old is a PLAC? A – This could be from 2 weeks old up to the age of 16. Even if a child was adopted at birth they would still be PLAC.</p> <p>All LAC and PLAC children have a PEP. Every school must have a named Designated Teacher – this is usually a member of the SLT. The Virtual School look after all LAC and PLAC in the LA.</p> <p>Q – How much contact do the virtual Headteachers have? A – None, but they can intervene, for example with a student who is at risk of permanent exclusion, they could arrange a new placement and a fresh start.</p> <p>Trustees were informed that it was not unusual for some children to be unaware they are PLAC, the information is very sensitive and is treated carefully and confidentially.</p> <p>Funding should be used to close the attainment gap for these children. Its use can be flexible, for example adoption counselling, as long as it is for the benefit of the child.</p> <p>Trustees noted there were currently 69 LAC/PLAC across the Trust. LW commented that now there are 5 primary schools within the Trust a Designated Teacher Primary network has been set up to collaborate. There is a big focus on the most vulnerable children.</p> <p>Q – How long do the students stay in care? A – There is no set timescale. Some children may go back to their parents at some point. Each case is individual.</p>	
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		<p>Approach to directing pupils off-site, exclusions and suspensions</p>	<p>The Trust approach was confirmed to Trustees.</p> <p>Guidance changed a couple of years ago. Head of School can direct students to another school for a fixed period of time, rather than a suspension which is served at home. This is done primarily within another Trust school and has to be reviewed after 2 weeks. An offsite placement is designed to improve student behaviour and to allow reflection before they return to their own school. The Trust do find the off-site provision to be effective and it is documented within the school policies. The students work in withdrawn study and do not join classes at the host school.</p> <p>Q – Typically how long is off-site provision? A – Guidance states a placement must be reviewed after 2 weeks. We do not believe any longer is effective. Typically, we use for one week.</p> <p>Q – Is there an option for a student with behavioural issues to permanently transfer? A – This would be a managed move and would need the agreement of parents/carers. This can be done via the LA. A managed transfer has a trial period of 6 weeks before being made permanent. This has proved very effective for some students. A managed transfer can also be terminated by the receiving Headteacher.</p>	
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4	Financial performance	Financial Oversight	<p>The management accounts have been added to the Trustee files for information.</p> <p>The External Auditor will be attending the Audit and Risk meeting to present the Audit Report and Annual Accounts.</p> <p>The reserves had been significantly reduced over the financial year 2024 – 2025 and this was in part due to the opening of 3 new Sixth Forms, significantly high supply costs and high off-site provision costs.</p> <p>The current year management accounts do not currently reflect the pay uplifts and awards which are paid in November 2024 salaries. WM commented that the significant changes and difficult decisions made over the previous months had helped the financial position, but that the NI employer changes will prove difficult.</p> <p>Q – Are the NI changes not funded? A – The Government has stated that the NI changes are funded at a national level but, on average, the grants that we have received cover only 80-85% of cost increase. The grant details will not be known until March 2025.</p> <p>Leaders are working with Integrated Curriculum Financial Planning moving forward. This builds in all the financial aspects to assist when curriculum planning. Meetings are currently taking place with secondary Heads of School to look at curriculum plans for September 2025, and any subsequent recruitment. It is an everchanging picture at present, meetings will be completed by the end of term.</p> <p>It was noted that the Trust still needs to grow the reserves over the coming 3 years in order to hold reserves in line with our reserves policy. The DfE would intervene if reserves were too high, or the Trust was in a deficit position. Two trustees were meeting with A Law to discuss reserves.</p> <p>Q – Given the budget issues over the summer what is the notable difference for staff and children? A – The biggest change has been to class sizes at KS3. We have always protected front line services in terms of education. Bigger classes could be an issue in the future. Trustees noted the remarkable job done in retaining the front line services, but that the impact on staff should not be underestimated.</p>
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			Thanks were offered to LM and the Executive Team.	
		Annual Report and Accounts	The Annual Report and Accounts will be presented to Trustees at the Audit and Risk Committee on 6 th December.	
5	AOB	AOB	There was no other business to discuss.	
6	Meeting dates	Meeting dates to note:	TBM3 – Wednesday 5 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.	

Impact of Meeting / Key Outcomes	
Trustees reviewed Trust Board membership and committees	
Trustees approved 26 policies	
Verbal updates were received from committee chairs following their meetings	
TDP theme Recognised for Excellence was reviewed	
CEO updated on Trust growth plans	
CFO confirmed the Autumn School Census had been completed and submitted for all schools	
J Peet gave a presentation on CEIAG across the Trust	
G Turnpenney confirmed the Trust applies and adheres to the SEND Code of Practice	
Trustees received a presentation on support for Looked After Children	
Trustees reviewed the Trust approach to directing pupils off-site provision	

Meeting closed at 12.50pm



T Little
Chair of Trust Board
05.02.2025