

The Heath Family (NW) Multi Academy Trust
MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON
THURSDAY 7TH NOVEMBER 2013

Present: Peter Cook (Chair), Nigel Peet, Jane Ainsworth, Alicia Parry,
Stephen Dewhurst, Heather Mullaney, Paula Cain

In Attendance: Trish Jordan (Clerk)

1. **Welcome** - P Cook welcomed everyone present and then invited everyone to introduce themselves to the group and to explain what experiences/expertise that they bring with them to the MAT board.

2. **Introductions**

3. **Governors – Key Functions for the Trust**

P Cook explained that the purpose of this item was to gain agreement for the Key Functions of the Trust.

H Mullaney said that she felt that the document needed to be fluid and dynamic, especially due to the changing nature of the Trust whilst it evolves.

P Cook said that he felt it was an excellent paper and that it sets the scene, illustrating the wide ranging set of items that the Trust is going to be involved in. It will need to be responsive and proactive as the Trust grows.

Action: 1. Change draft to approved.
2. The document is to given to WT/JJA and taken to the respective Governing Bodies.

Monitoring of Schools in the Trust

It was clarified that the Board had delegated Governance to The Heath and SWS, however this would not be the case for The Park

It was agreed that SIPs would be appointed by the board for all schools.

Secondary SIP for The Heath and SWS for 2013-2014 is C Wilkinson who is already performing this function in both schools.

SIP would be reviewed annually.

A primary SIP is working at The Park

It was agreed that each school would also undergo an Ofsted style "Health Check" each year undertaken by an Ofsted trained Inspector.

This was already planned for The Heath using Clive Hurren. Key outcomes will be reported at the next meeting

4. Vision, Values & Aims

The Board discussed the draft that had been sent out with the agenda.

H Mullaney requested that:

- As The Park was now formally entering into the Trust, that due to the age of the children at the Primary School, that students be changed to students/children.
- Change "We're in the Business of Learning" to "Together in the Business of Learning".

The Board said that they were happy for this document to be put on the MAT website that is going to be developed.

Discussion then followed regarding adding a line into the section entitled Aims that spoke about "Progress".

The members present agreed and approved the document (once amendments have been made).

Action: Document to be amended. Document to be circulated to The Principals of both schools

5. The Park Primary School

H Mullaney explained to the Board the situation regarding The Park Primary School.

Background: The Park Primary School is a small primary with 107 students. H Mullaney was approached by the DfE and LA to support primary as NLE. H Mullaney was asked to bring her own expertise to support the school, as she had already helped Weston and Woodside.

Serious issues were immediately observed in the school in most key areas. T and L, Land M, attainment, progress and Governance

H Mullaney brought in a primary Ofsted Inspector to carry out an immediate Health Check. It was carried out last February and the school was put into Special Measures in every area.

The Ofsted report was not given to the Governors, Staff or the LA.

The Head and Governors of The Park looked at conversion to an Academy and subsequently applied to convert. The DfE officials came into the school and they issued a Full Sponsored Academy Order straight away due to the extreme vulnerability of the school.

A serious conversation then took place between the Head and the Chair of Governors. The Head then went off on long term sickness. The deputy accepted the challenge of Acting Head Ofsted arrived 4 days later

The Ofsted Inspector who came to the school was fair, it was a well-rounded inspection.

The process for full sponsorship was then applied for, which went through (October 2103) H Mullaney reported that the process of undergoing conversion of the Park has started, and that the start up funding was £120,000.

It was suggested that the board should procure support for the conversion using the Academies framework

Action This was agreed, HM and SD to initiate the procurement process alongside the DfE lead Rebecca Gore.

HM confirmed that The LA were accepting responsibility for resolving the issues re the substantive Head

P Cook asked how confident the Trust was with the Acting Head.

HM said that she would suggest possibly look at keeping him as Head of School, with herself as Executive Principal; she also said maybe if another school came into the Trust, their Head could become Executive Principal.

HM explained that as The Park was such a small school, whoever was appointed, they would need to be really focused on accessibility. The biggest problem with the school is Governance. Since going into Special Measures in June, there have only been 2 Governing Body meetings. There had also been a Governing Body meeting set up recently to look at External Review of Governance and only 2 Governors attended. H Mullaney reiterated that the biggest problem was still Governance. The Chair of Governors had promised to engage, but as of yet he still hadn't. HM stated that an IEB needed to be put in place.

Recently a Primary SIP has been appointed, funded by The Park and LA. Targets have been reset for the school. The Acting Head (Deputy Head) has been trained to enable him complete Lesson Observations.

HM said that as there was no local governance in place she would be looking at the Board to take up the role of strengthening Governance. She also said that Gill Bennett was involved as she has an extensive, current knowledge of primary education and the LA had agreed that she should be a part of the Governing Body for The Park after conversion.

Following discussion the Board thought that the situation at The Park needed to be rectified before March in terms of Governance.

HM voiced concern regarding the next Ofsted monitoring visit being just after Christmas, and a lot of work has gone on at The Park, but the report could be bad as nothing has moved on in relation to Governance.

P Cain asked about the process to remove a Chair of Governors. The response was that the LA could approach the Secretary of State to ask for the Chair of Governors to be removed.

HM explained that the Board could be invited onto the Governors by The Park Governing Body. She explained that the current Governing Body at The Park has a low skills set. The Board were also told about the Raise Online training that was taking place at The Park tonight for their Governing Body. J Jardine and H Mullaney will be delivering the training.

HM tabled The Park's Action Plan.

SD – explained that his preference would be to be invited onto the Governing Body. This was due to community reasons; he explained that if the Board were invited on they would be more likely to receive support from the staff and school community. He explained that The Park was remote to our community and this could have an impact on how the Board would be received. He then went on to say that if this did not happen the Board could then look at other options. This was agreed.

HM spoke to the Board about the Pre-Academy Grant and offer, and also about signing the document Appendix A. She felt that this was something that she needed to share with the Board as they needed to be aware of the legalities. The Board were given a copy of the document.

HM explained that on page 27 of the document it outlines what the money can be spent on. She also explained that she had had to supply an indicative spend to get the funding. (Copy to be sent out to the Board.)

Hill Dickinson have been engaged as the legal team.

HM also spoke about the Environment Improvement Grant. This would be used to improve the environment inside school and outside. HM explained that some of the classrooms had poor daylight. Bridge Timber are looking into this.

HM then went on to speak about the Office Manager at The Park. She had uncovered problems such as Long term sickness insurance claims had not been sent off in relation to the Head, which was losing the school £1,000 per week, dinner money hadn't been banked, money had been found between two files.

Action: H Mullaney to keep the Board updated.

6. The Heath SIP

H Mullaney explained to the Board that she had sat in on the Target Setting meeting with J Jardine and the SIP and that she had agreed the targets at that point.

Following discussion it was agreed that the targets could be signed off for 2014 and 2015.

All agreed.

7. Sir William Stanier SIP

N Peet reported that everything had been tagged as improving. He said that in the past he hadn't been sure whether it was strenuous enough, but he felt that this report was very good.

The Board asked how the SIP (Chris Wilkinson) had been received, and whether the SLT had bought into his assessment.

N Peet said that he had been well received and the SLT had engaged with the process.

J Ainsworth & A Parry said that they had worked with Chris for a long time, and they thought his work was phenomenal. A Parry also mentioned that on reading the SIP she could see the journey that the Head had been on.

N Peet reported that Sir William Stanier had received 155 first preferences, this time last year it was 125. He felt that the school was now pulling in more students, and some of the reasons for this was due to marketing, visiting primary schools. He said that in the past they had faced competition from other schools in Sandbach and Nantwich, which he now felt they were starting to pull some of the students back.

N Peet said that it was a nice time to take over the Chair.

H Mullaney reported that she was supporting W Trafford, Head of SWS, and that a company had been commissioned in relation to non-teaching staffing. She explained that on comparison with The Heath, there was a vast difference between non-teaching staff at the two schools.

The company is meeting with the SLT to find out what they need in terms of non-teaching staff support. They will then come up with 2 or 3 scenarios, which may involve redundancies, or natural slippage.

8. Performance Management of Principals

H Mullaney explained that she had agreed targets on behalf of the Board, but neither of the Heads had had pay progression until the Board had agreed the targets.

She explained that as a result of the Board agreeing them, then there would be no need to have a Pay Sub, as the agreement had been done at Board level.

H Mullaney also let the Board know that she would present the Mid-Term Reviews to them as well.

Following discussion the pay progression for both Headteachers was agreed by the Board.

Action: Chairs of Governors from the respective schools to take agreement back to their relevant schools.

9. Future Agenda Items

After discussion the following items will appear as standing items on each agenda:

Finance Reports: Board to receive Finance minutes from each school.
Trust Level – need to have a report on how money has been deployed.

Meet the Principals at the beginning of each school year. Maybe just have this as a 1 item agenda where Principals report to the Board, regarding results etc.

Also, another meeting in July, whereby the Principals report on the Key Objectives for the coming year, strategic plans etc.

The Board felt that this was a good idea and agreed for this to take place.

Discussion then went on to the Board visiting the schools that are part of the Trust. It was agreed that visits would be arranged. H Mullaney is meeting with W Trafford in the near future and would speak to him about this. Provisional date: 6th December 2013

It was agreed that the Board should visit the schools at least once per year.

P Cook asked whether the Board would be seeing Traffic Lights/Data Dashboards. H Mullaney explained that they were taken to Governing Bodies and that they were live on the website, but if the Board wanted they could come alongside the SIP reports.

Professional Associates were also discussed. H Mullaney spoke about Luke Green from Hill Dickinson working within 2 different local authorities. She then spoke about negotiating policies such as Appointment, Pay, Appraisal at local level, and then went on to talk about collective agreement with the LA's.

H Mullaney reported that Pay and Appraisal policies were due to be finalised on Friday. She said that the unions were happy in the way that this process had been conducted, especially with the way that they had been given a part to play in the process itself.

The Board agreed that they were happy with this situation.

10. AoB

H Mullaney reported that The Heath had been redesignated for IQM and would be invited to become a Centre of Excellence. Sir William Stanier would also be moving to IQM as a non negotiable.

N Peet reported that he was currently looking at the shape of the Governing Body at Sir William Stanier. He said that the splits didn't fit the way he wanted to go. H Mullaney said that Mike Murphy at Hill Dickinson was an expert of Governance and that it may be worthwhile N Peet contacting him.

J Ainsworth then also spoke about The Heath Governing Body. She said that currently there were 2 vacancies for parent governors and that she had received 3 applications. J Ainsworth said that she would rather take on an extra governor instead of turning a willing applicant away.

Discussion then followed.

The meeting closed at 11.30 am

Date of Next Meeting: 27th February 2014

These minutes are approved as a true record of the meeting

Signed:
[Peter Cook]

Date: 6th March 2014