

Waterton Academy Trust

Minutes of an Extraordinary Trust Board Meeting

DATE: 5 th January 2021	TIME: 6pm	LOCATION: Held via video conferencing (Microsoft Teams)
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Attendees

Chair:	B Cook	
Trustees	P Beaman	
	D Dickinson (<i>CEO</i>)	L Rowlinson-Brown
	A Goudie	J Shaw
	S Johnson	N Shaw
Clerk:	L Clark (<i>MAT Governance Officer</i>)	
Apologies:	S Bates	

ITEM	ACTION
1. Welcome to a meeting held via video conferencing / welcome to Neil Shaw The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Introductions were made to newly appointed Trustee, Neil Shaw.	
2. Apologies for Absence Apologies of absence were received from S Bates.	
3. Declarations of Interest The standing register of declarations of interest was noted.	
4. Rationale for meeting The CEO provided a brief summary of the rationale for the meeting and the changing situation since the Christmas break. There had been communications on 3 rd January due to the ongoing confusion regarding the opening of primary schools. The Government had instructed primary schools to open but national teaching unions had instructed staff to not return to work if they did not feel safe. Trustees had initially asked for an update on this and assurances that schools were able to open safely. A meeting was scheduled for 4 th January, however, with the announcement by the Prime Minister that there was to be a national address that evening regarding another national lockdown it was felt to be the sensible approach to move this meeting to 5 th January.	

ITEM	ACTION
<p>Trustees were thanked for their flexibility in arranging this meeting at such short notice. All were in agreement that the Trust continue to respond quickly and effectively to this ever changing complex environment.</p>	
<p>5. Union Section 44 Letters to Headteachers</p>	
<p>The CEO provided a brief summary regarding the challenge from the unions which was to move learning online for the first two weeks of the term. It was noted that this was now no longer relevant following the Government's announcement on the evening of the 4th January closing all primary schools.</p> <p>However, Trustees did discuss the impact which may have occurred should significant numbers of staff exercise their legal right not to attend an unsafe place of work. It was noted that less than 1% of teachers across the Trust had sent a letter for 4th January indicating that they would not be attending work, and that a high proportion of these were from Walton Primary Academy (WPA). Through a range of questions and discussion it was noted that there may have been more staff who would have sent a letter stating that they would not attend work but that individuals were possibly waiting to hear for certainty whether another lockdown was announced. It was also noted that not attending work under section 44 is not classed as strike action; it is a legal contractual right for staff to exercise this right; and officially the staff not attending work were not off work as the letter stated they were not willing to attend a fully opened school due to safety.</p> <p>It was raised and discussed that a health and safety questionnaire, and wellbeing survey are being sent out to staff and it is hoped that this will provide further context and information, particularly about the higher numbers at WPA who did not attend work.</p> <p>Overall, it was felt that the impact was not significant and Trustees thanked the CEO for the update on this.</p>	
<p>6. CEO Report</p>	
<p>The Chair introduced this item explaining that the CEO would provide an update on the situation and the actions that the Trust have put in place in response to the government announcement.</p> <p>The CEO informed Trustees that he had been in meetings all day with the SLT and Headteachers. All non-essential meetings have been cancelled and the central team office at Crofton has closed and is running remotely. All capacity reducing projects are being pushed back slightly. The risk assessments have gone back out to schools for further review and the CEO has requested completion by next week for his review, input and sign off. A health and safety survey and wellbeing survey has also been commissioned.</p> <p>During the detailed meeting with Headteachers there was a protocol agreed regarding the frequency of communications with pupils. There had been some frustrations during the first lockdown that there had been discrepancies with a small number of schools regarding contact. Children will be having contact with teachers on a daily basis and plans are in place should children not be in school or are not</p>	

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<p>accessing the remote learning. The SENDO will also be involved in keeping in touch, and any vulnerable child or a child of concern will receive a phone call from an appropriate adult.</p> <p>The CEO also explained the importance of staff keeping in touch with each other and not becoming isolated, particularly NQTs or recently qualified teachers (RQTs). There will be a continuation of staff meetings using Teams and buddy groups (e.g. phase leaders) will be set up to ensure continual conversations and ongoing support. Some teachers will be accessing the classroom to deliver lessons using the interactive whiteboards. The School Improvement team (SI) will be working closely with staff particularly in providing support to the NQTs and RQTs.</p> <p>There has been a huge learning curve since the first lockdown and now the Trust and schools are in a much better position to deliver high quality remote learning. Every child in the Trust has an office 365 account and will all be accessing online learning following a timetable. Schools each have in place a policy document advising parents of what the school is aiming to provide through the online learning. The Trust also have 260 laptops on order from the DfE based on numbers of disadvantaged pupils. An advert is currently out for a lead on blending learning with the aim of having this in place by Easter. Although this individual will not be in place for this lockdown there will be a range of catch up curriculum provision which will be delivered by blended learning, which they will lead on.</p> <p>An update on 'feeding our children' was provided and whilst feedback on the hampers during the first lockdown had been very positive, a combination of logistical concerns and the nature of the spread of the virus means that the voucher scheme now remains the most appropriate method. This had been administered successfully over the Christmas period and will continue. A hot meal service will be delivered on every site open to vulnerable children and the children of key workers.</p> <p>Schools have written to families to confirm key worker status and whilst only one parent is required to be a key worker, school are asking for proof that there is not another adult at home, as if at all possible children should access the online provision rather than attend school.</p> <p>There are numerous development projects which will be continued including the construction work at Charlston, and the extension at Ackworth Mill Dam (AMD) which has secured the future of the school by increasing the PAN. L Rowlinson-Brown whose children attend the school commented extremely positively on the construction work at AMD. Work also continue on installation of interactive whiteboards as part of a piece of work regarding reducing leasing and interest costs on the whiteboards. A range of compliance work will also be programmed in whilst schools are not fully open.</p> <p>A question was asked about the number of children of key workers attending and how this will be managed. The CEO confirmed that the Trust already has an idea of the numbers and the same processes will be in place with regards children being registered at least the week before. Last time some schools due to numbers, some schools created 'hubs' but the Trust are reluctant to do this due to the spread of the</p>	

ITEM	ACTION
<p>new strain of the virus and Headteachers will continue to work on a locality basis. It was also felt that more families will be set up working from home, that employers are more flexible and understanding of the situation and that the remote learning offer more closely mirrors a normal school day, and therefore numbers of children of key workers needing to attend school may be fewer.</p> <p>A query was raised from a Trustee regarding the number of staff physically in school, and the CEO confirmed that he will be reviewing schools' operation plans and these will be challenged should this show too many members of staff in school. A question was raised about Wrenthorpe in particular on this matter, and the CEO confirmed he will pick this up with the Headteacher to clarify.</p> <p>In response to a question from a Trustee, the CEO confirmed that there are contingency plans in place should a member of staff (or child) test positive for covid – if in the classroom then a bubble would collapse, and if teaching remotely then it may be that children can access a recorded lesson.</p> <p>Trustees thanked the CEO for the timely update, detail provided, and commented positively on the Trust response.</p>	CEO
<p>7. Open discussion</p>	
<p>Trustees reviewed the data which provides an overview of the local context of positive covid-19 tests, as seven date rate per 100,000 population by age group for Wakefield. It was also noted that children are more likely to be asymptomatic and therefore there would be some skew in the figures. All reiterated that where possible all should stay at home and minimise contacts. The provision in school should be as safe as possible for children and staff. Trustees confirmed that this has been echoed in business, and that all are working from home wherever possible.</p> <p>Trustees all felt positive with the work undertaken to date to review risk assessments, and that the remote learning strategy, provision and communications were effective. L Rowlinson-Brown commented that she has implemented a well-being strategy in her workplace which she will share with the CEO to assist with the work which the Trust are undertaking.</p> <p>A question was raised regarding the Centre of Excellence programmes. The CEO confirmed that revenue is guaranteed but some cohorts will be delayed slightly. Some elements will be run remotely where possible.</p> <p>In response to a question from a Trustee regarding PPE and the use of PPE in schools, Trustees engaged in a robust and detailed discussion. A Trustee felt that PPE could be used more widely in primary schools, such as it is in secondary schools, but whilst the advice remains that facemasks should not be worn in the classroom and that PPE should only be used unless intimate care is required, then Trustees were in agreement that the relevant and most up to date government guidance should be followed. The Trust have followed all government guidance to date, and all agreed this should continue to be the stance in order to protect the work of the Trust. The role of Trustee, remit and responsibilities were discussed, and agreed that discussions should not sway into the operational detail. The focus should</p>	L R-B

ITEM	ACTION
<p>be on positively impacting outcomes for the children, and this is achieved in part by following all relevant and up to date guidelines. It was reiterated that all record keeping and evidence regarding risk assessments and guidance followed should continue to be in place.</p> <p>Trustees asked questions about wraparound care (breakfast and afterschool clubs) and the CEO confirmed that each school are reviewing how this can be operated. At Wrenthope where the pre-school provides wraparound care, this will no longer be the case as bubbles within school must be maintained. A discussion took place regarding the school nursery provision and the preschool provision. The preschool is open. There is some discrepancy currently about whether this early years can move to blended learning and how census data will be collected for funding. B Cook confirmed she will be seeking clarity on this and will update the Trust.</p> <p>The CEO informed Trustees that he will provide a brief update at the AGM next week.</p>	BC
<p>8. Any Other Business</p>	
<p>None.</p>	
<p>9. Feedback to / from Hub Board and ASCs – Questions, Concerns, Comments</p>	
<p>None at present.</p>	
<p>10. Identification of Confidential Items</p>	
<p>None.</p>	
<p>11. Confirmation of Date and Time of Next Meeting</p>	
<p>The Clerk confirmed the date of the AGM as 13th January 2021, and the next Trust Board meeting as 2nd March 2021, as per the agreed governance schedule. Dairy invitees will be sent out.</p> <p>It was noted that reports will soon be moved into Teams rather than WES – this is an ongoing piece of work.</p> <p>Trustees recorded their thanks for the continued hard work by all staff at the Trust. The CEO thanked Trustees for their support and the scrutiny and oversight they provide.</p>	

MEETING CLOSED 7:10pm

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

Actions from the Trust Board meeting held on 14 July 2020

Agenda Item N ^o	Summary of Action	Who?	When?
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6	Check and confirm schools plans for numbers of staff in schools	CEO	asap
7	Share well-being strategy	L R-B	asap
7	Seek clarity on early years census data	BC	asap

DRAFT