

Draft Minutes of the MAT BOARD held on Monday 16 December 2024 (5:00pm) (the meeting commenced at 5:30pm)

<u>Trustees:</u>	Carlton Midgley (MAT Chair), Amanda Bennett OBE (CEO)
[Finance]	David Purdon (Chair of Finance), John Midgley
[School Improvement]	Ken Inwood, Diane McConnell (subject to approval)
[Estates Management]	James Power, Illy Jaffar
[Workforce]	Mark McManus, Vicky Stoneman
<u>GHAT staff:</u>	CFOO (J Firth), Governance Professional (Helen Ward), Dir of School Improvement, D Worthington; Dir of Governance, A Midgley; Exec Principal – Performance & Outcomes, J Sayles

Quorum required: 4

Key
<i>Q: Governor support, questions, and challenge</i>
<i>A: Responses</i>

No	Subject	Action
1.	APOLOGIES No apologies had been received as everyone was present. James Power arrived 10 minutes late.	
2.	DECLARATION OF INTERESTS C Midgley (Chair of Trustees) reiterated his family relationship to J Midgley (Trustee) and A Midgley (Director of Governance). D Worthington (Director of School Improvement) is related to new Trustee M McManus.	
3.	OPENING REMARKS / GOVERNANCE UPDATE AND TO REPORT ANY 'CHAIR'S ACTION' Thanks were extended to: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nigel Oliver, the former governance professional who had been the Greetland and MAT Board clerk for over 20 years. Jackie Nellis for her time as Vice Chair and SEND link governor. Approved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the appointment of James Power as Vice Chair. The appointment of Diane McConnell as Trustee and SEND link. 	
4.	MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS The minutes of the MAT Board meeting held on 21 October 2024 were approved as a true and accurate record and signed by the chair.	
5.	MATTERS ARISING Matters arising not on the agenda: Action point 1: All documents would be reviewed in case anything needed to be redacted before they were published on the website.	Jayne

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6.	CORRESPONDENCE, INCLUDING ESFA <u>Reply from the DfE about the MFG questions</u> Over the summer an email had been received from the DfE regarding safeguarding arrangements at MFG. The central Trust team spent many days collating and providing the evidence required and on 3 December 2024 a letter had been received to confirm the case was closed. Consistent structures and systems would be implemented across all the schools in the Trust in order that the academies could attend effectively to complaints. This would positively impact the wellbeing of the headteachers. Complaints were increasing exponentially in secondary schools as anyone could submit an anonymous complaint. The government acknowledged that this needed to change.	
7.	MAT REPORTING:	
7.1	CEO Report The CEO report was a continuous report with information being provided by the sub committees. The CEO Report, RID Reporting Summary and supporting documents were taken as read.	
	Leadership and Organisational Development A whole Trust training session was held in November 2024 where the visions and values were reset. The 'Power Hours' were going well. There had been a churn in the Trust finance team, however the current structure was operating well with members of staff being upskilled. Leaders were now leading their teams. CVHS was the main concern, and a lot of money had been invested in the school.	
	Questions and answers A Q&A document was provided prior to the meeting and the CEO presented this on the screen. Some questions were answered on the shared document whilst others were answered in the meeting. <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Update on SIP – provided in written document.2. Preparation plans for an Ofsted visit to CVHS - provided in written document.3. HR Plan moving forward – See Workforce Minute (7.2 below).4. Finance recruitment update – See Finance Minute (7.2 below).5. Persistent Absenteeism at Carlinghow - provided in written document.6. Update from SI Committee on schools that had joined the Trust – See SI Minute (7.2 below).7. Progress for SCA funding allocations - See Estates Minute (7.2 below).8. Common themes from LGB Chairs and Safeguarding network meetings - provided in written document.9. Recent pitches from schools - provided in written document. The CEO advised that the CVHS due diligence was correct at the time it took place, but problems arose with the outgoing Trust that had disintegrated and the timeframe of onboarding which took two years. This had resulted in a lot of money being invested in CVHS.	

	<p>The Academy landscape had stalled due to changes in politics so work would be ongoing to secure the current schools, and any future expansions would be discussed at the Trust Board.</p> <p>It was noted that Nields and Marsden were the feeder schools for CVHS. CVHS would improve with the correct leadership. Good leadership was in place at MFG which was travelling in a positive direction.</p> <p>QA Visits External QA visits had taken place as follows: - Nields – 25.11.2024 CVHS – 22.11.2024 Marsden – 26.11.2024</p>	
7.2	COMMITTEE CHAIRS REPORTING	
	<p>Workforce (M McManus)</p> <p>Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary school recruitment – this was a national issue. There was a need for social media advertising, CVHS was launching a Facebook page. • The departure of the HR director had reduced staffing in the HR team and there was limited expertise for developing themes. A HR consultant had completed a review, a summary had been shared and recommendations provided. Various options had been discussed and it was agreed that the best option that was cost neutral would be to employ an HR consultant two days per week for a 12-month period. This would be reviewed in nine-months' time. It was recommended that an IT recruitment platform be purchased, 'MyNewTerm', at an annual cost of £10,500 which would assist with recruitment issues moving forward. <p>The Pay Policy had been amended and recommended for approval by the MAT Board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes had been made to the national pay and conditions as pay progression was no longer performance related. • The Executive pay was included in the Pay Policy. • MFG TLR pay needed to be frozen as employees were receiving higher pay at this school compared to others. New starters would, however, be in line with employees at the other schools. The HR consultant would action this as Unions would need to be involved before anything could be implemented. • The upper pay range and formal performance processes were discussed. If an employee was in a formal performance process, they would not necessarily move to the next pay scale until the process had been resolved. <p>Resolved: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That engagement with an HR consultant two days per week for a 12-month period be approved. • That the purchase of the recruitment platform (£10,500) be approved. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That the Pay Policy, including Executive Pay be approved. <p>C. Midgley was asked to consider the compliance of the Independent Advisor who is paid for services to the Trust.</p>	
	<p>School Improvement (K Inwood)</p> <p>Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was a major concern around the ability of the leadership at CVHS to move the school forward. Outcomes for disadvantaged students at both secondary academies was significantly below the national averages. <p>MFG would work on the Ofsted recommendations:</p> <p>A) Disadvantaged pupil outcomes and provision and</p> <p>B) Sixth form curriculum teaching and outcomes.</p> <p>Significant improvements in all five areas of Ofsted had been noted at Nields. Not everything had been embedded and monitored so impact had not yet been measured.</p> <p>Persistent Absence had increased across all schools. This was still a major challenge. Carlinghow had the highest PA.</p> <p>The EYFS at Nields required improvement and the outside space was inadequate. Standards could not be improved without improvements to the outside space.</p> <p>Bowling Green had shown significant improvement in last three years and was now outstanding in all areas.</p> <p>Marsden – there were signs that the school was moving forward.</p> <p>The GHAT Designations report provided positive feedback across all schools. Moving forward impact of Designations would be captured. A lot more cross checking would be carried out as opposed to merely listing achievements.</p>	
	<p>Estates (J Power)</p> <p>Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A table had been provided in the report detailing the current risks at each school and the strategy to develop. A further report was being produced by Ben Clow which would determine work to be carried out, but spending would be required. There had been a data breach incident which had been quickly resolved by the IT Trust team and staff would receive further CPD. The West Vale server had reached the end of life. A new server would be installed using capital funding. <p>Issues</p> <p>Nields T&L environment required improvement so an application had been submitted for funding to make these improvements.</p>	

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	<p>Complaints There had been a number of complaints which had been monitored by the Director of Governance.</p> <p>Estates plans would be shared.</p> <p><i>Q. Was there an update on Windows 11?</i> <i>A. Not at the moment as this was part of the long-term IT strategy.</i></p> <p><i>Q. Is there a reason why we are losing senior staff?</i> <i>A. There are different reasons, but all employees take part in an exit interview. If there were common trends, we would investigate this further but there had been none. Resignations were due to a combination of factors including personal reasons, formal processes and whistleblowing.</i></p>	
7.3	TRUST POLICIES, UPDATES & APPROVALS	
	<p>Finance – Trustees approved the following on the recommendation of the Finance Committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual Reports and Accounts 2023 – 2024.• Reappoint Simpson Wood as external auditors.• Reappoint TIAA as internal auditors.• The internal audit programme for 2024/25.• The Management Accounts. <p>Workforce – Trustees approved the following on the recommendation of the Workforce Committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employ an HR consultant two days per week for a 12-month period.• Purchase the recruitment platform (£10,500).• The Pay Policy, including Executive Pay.• TES subscription (£30,098). <p>Estates – Trustees approved the following on the recommendation of the Estates Committee: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nields Security Perimeter Fence.	
7.4	FINANCIAL APPROVALS	
	<p>Finance (D Purdon) Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In year deficit of £375,000 mainly linked to MFG and their lower 6th form student numbers.• The low numbers will further impact in 2025/26.• Support staff and other costs would not be sustainable.• MFG would be a priority focus for the new calendar year.• CVHS had also impacted finances. The onboarding of two secondary schools was a big undertaking. <p>Issues The CFO had left the Trust; however, it was reassuring to note how well the Interim Accountant and DCFO had dealt with the change and managed the</p>	

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	<p>audit process. Finance were working as a team and recruitment of a management accountant was ongoing. A CFO would not be appointed.</p> <p>Decisions The internal audit programme would concentrate on three main areas. Payroll, Cyber Security and Capital expenditure.</p> <p>There were substantial cash balances in the Trust but the £5,000,000 was not bearing interest. John Priestley had carried out a forecasting exercise to place £2,000,000 into interest bearing accounts which had been authorised by the finance committee.</p> <p>Invoices had been approved for payment.</p>	
8.	<p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everyone present was thanked for their granular discussions. It was felt that the new model for meetings was much improved. The CEO advised that Ofsted would inspect the Trust and asked all members to consider the sample questions. Thanks were extended to the Chairs of each committee. 	
9.	<p>STANDING ITEM MAT Board Decisions & Next Steps Nothing was discussed.</p>	
10.	<p>FUTURE GOVERNANCE CALENDAR</p> <p>Monday 24th March 2025, <i>Board #3 (5.00) and all committees x4 (4.00)</i></p> <p>Monday 7th July 2025, <i>Board #4 (5.00) and all committees x4 (4.00)</i></p> <p>Saturday 12th July 2025 (end of year review)</p>	
11.	<p>Date of next meeting Monday 24th March 2025, <i>Board #3 (5.00) and all committees x4 (4.00)</i></p>	
	The meeting closed at 6.37pm.	
Signature:		Date:

No	Action	Who	By when
	Action point 1: All documents would be reviewed in case anything needed to be redacted before they were published on the website.	Jayne	Next meeting

for JG
24/03/25

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