

**Polaris Multi-Academy**

 **Trust Board Meeting**

**15 September 2022**

**MINUTES**

**Present at the Meeting: -**

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| **Directors:** | **Duncan Brundell** | **(Chair)** | **DB** |
|  | **Ian Philp** |  | **IP** |
|  | **Andrew Tatham** |  | **AT** |
|  | **Sam Priestley** |  | **SP** |
|  | **Nick Midgley** |  | **NM** |
|  | **Jackie Nellis** |  | **JN** |
|  | **Andy Mahon** |  | **AM** |

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| **Attendees:** | **David Whitehead** | **(Clerk)** | **DW** |
|  | **Steve Evans** | **CEO** | **SE** |
|  | **Sarah Laverick** | **CFO** | **SL** |
|  | **Matt Crowther** | **Director of School Imp** | **MC** |

DB welcomed all to the meeting and started the meeting with a one minute silence to honour the passing of the nation’s longest serving monarch and the epitome of public service

***See Appendix One for questions submitted prior to the meeting and the responses provided.***

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| 1.0 Apologies for Absence |
| Apologies were noted and accepted from John Sharp & Karen Bowron & Richard Longley |
| 2.0 Declaration of Interest for items upon the agenda |
| Presented by: | Clerk |
| There were no declarations of interest.All were asked to complete the Declaration of Pecuniary interest forms which were circulated.All confirmed that they had read KCSIE which had been circulated via the portal. |
| 3.0 Appointment of Chair & Vice Chair |
| Presented by: | Clerk |
| DB was nominated for the position of Chair of the Trust Board**Proposed: IP Seconded: AM****DB was unanimously elected as Chair.**Ian Philp was nominated as Vice Chair of the Trust Board**Proposed: AT Seconded: SP****IP was unanimously elected as Vice Chair of the Trust Board** |
| 4.0 Appointment of LGB Chairs |
| Presented by: | Chair |
| The following were proposed as Chairs of the Local Governing Boards:**Luddendenfoot Academy**Marie Briggs**Siddal Primary School** Sally Moore**Field Lane Primary School**Paul Booth **Rastrick High School**Sam Priestley**The appointment above were unanimously approved.** |
| 5.0 Appointment of Trust Leads |
| Presented by: | Chair |
| The following Trust Leads were confirmed:Safeguarding – SPPupil Premium – DBSEND - JNSE advised of the scheme of training being created for Trust Directors and LGB Governors.The SEND review and Safeguarding review planned was also noted.The numbers of Governors on the LGB’s in the Trust were outlined.JN advised that she will meet with the person carrying out the SEND review and report back to the Board. |
| 6.0 Scheme of Delegation  |
| Presented by: | CEO |
| The Scheme of Delegation was summarised by SE and had been circulated prior to the meeting.**The Scheme of Delegation was unanimously approved by Directors****Proposed: AT Seconded: NM** |
| 7.0 Policy Review |
| Presented by: | CEO |
| The Exception Report had been circulated prior to the meeting.The changes made to the policies listed were noted to Directors.The Safeguarding updates and amendments to reflect both the Trust and LGBs’ responsibilities were summarized.The policies overall are relatively unchanged from last year and SE explained the rationale for the various amendments.The appointment of a Trust Estates Manager and how the relevant policies have been amended was also explained.The policy amendments made were unanimously approved by Directors. |
| 8.0 Minutes and Matters Arising from the Trust Board meeting 30 June 2022 |
| Presented by: | Chair |
| The minutes of the meeting had been circulated to all.Agenda item 6 – All SIP plans are being reviewed by the LGB’s at next week’s series of meetings.**Q – In respect of the capital works being carried out, is a Plan B needed in case they are not completed within the timescale?**A -No, all is in hand and running on time.The minutes were unanimously approved as a true record.**Proposed: IP Seconded: AT** |
| 9.0 CEO Standards Report |
| Presented by: | CEO |
| The CEO report had been circulated prior to the meeting.SE noted the importance of outliers in respect of the data presented.MC explained that there has been work taking place with the 3 primary schools on the reporting of necessary data on the pupils in the schools.The NTP programme and interventions which took place were outlined.Systems which allow for the data to be easily accessible in the schools are being introduced.How Progress rates are reported and the impact of the demographics in the different schools on the outcomes were explained.The importance of contextualising the data presented was stressed and the difference in emphasis on Attainment and Progress was noted.In respect of outliers, an example was given where there were 5 outliers out of a class of 15 at Siddal which had a significant impact on outcomes.The packages of support in place for these pupils was noted.CPD taking place for teachers in the schools was also outlined to Directors.**Q – Is this normal across the primary sector? How have the Heads taken the criticism of their systems?**A – MC summarised the scale score points which are now used and Heads did not fully understand the measures. The Heads have now embraced the processes to be followed.**Q – Have the Class teachers accepted the targets and the training being delivered?**A – There have been some queries on the aspirational targets which have been set.The importance placed on the Quality of Teaching and the curriculum was stressed.**Q - Do we have any data on entry levels into the schools?**A – This is now being developed in the schools and MC noted Siddal in particular, and the impact of 1 to 2 outliers on the data collected.AT noted the impact of individuals where there is a low number in a cohort.Understanding the narrative around certain children and the importance of progress being made by them and being recorded accurately was stressed by SP.The strong set of results seen at Luddendenfoot was also outlined and they are in the top 10-15% of schools nationally.JN noted the importance of progress and case studies of outliers being carried out.**Q - Michelle Joyce – any plans to have her back?**A – Yes, she will be coming in March to carry out reviews in the schools.**Q - Promoting the schools – how can we promote these to the communities?**A – MC explained the wider package of provision available to parents in respect of what they offer to pupils.This subject was discussed in detail by Directors.RHS The GCSE outcomes overall are very strong and the detail is contained in the report.The impact of the focus on delivering high quality of teaching at RHS over many years was noted.Cost of Living SupportThis was detailed in the report and SE advised that the provision of free school uniform has had been very positively received.The below inflation increases in transport and the cost of meals was particularly noted.SE summarised the level of support in place for pupils and families at the different schools.Behaviour support was also detailed along with the roles of the Educational Support Officers to address those families not currently registered as “in need” but due to the cost of living crisis were finding themselves in difficulty.SP noted how there had been a focus of removing distractions and allowing teachers to concentrate on teaching at RHS and this practice is now being filtered down to the primaries.**Q - Are you comfortable that the staff in place at Field Lane and Siddal feel they can approach the Trust for support when needed**?A – Yes. How the support in terms of behaviour management is in place was explained to Directors.National Support SchoolThe work being carried out was included in the report.The training sessions planned were outlined by SE.Work is still being accepted from schools where a relationship is already in place and SE summarised the type of work being carried out by himself, MC and MW. Work with local primaries is also taking place in respect of growth of the Polaris MAT.NPQEL – SE has been selected to deliver this training to fellow CEOs and executive leaders.**Trust Stakeholder Engagement Plan**SE summarised the action plan presented.The focus on community and industry noted by AM and DB was also outlined.An analytic report for Directors will be created as the data is collated.**Trust Strategic Plan 2022-2025**The update based on feedback from Directors was detailed by SE.How this will be reviewed moving forward was explained and discussed in detail.**Q - The objectives are being addressed and we are aiming for green at year-end. Are we comfortable that these will be achieved?**A – Yes. The drivers in place to ensure positive outcomes were noted by SE. **Trust 10 Year Draft Strategic Plan**SE explained how this has been worked on over the summer.Elements which can be included for public consumption were discussed and how they can be presented.The importance of demonstrating how the Trust will develop in line with national and local priorities was stressed by AT.The aspirational targets for the growth of the Trust schools was discussed in detail by Directors.AM noted the importance of having a Board-level strategy in writing and how this can be edited in terms of encouraging prospective schools to join the MAT.Directors discussed recruitment to the Trust in detail and an update on potential new schools will be provided at the next meeting |
| 10.0 Any Other Business  |
| Presented by: | Chair |
| Audit Planning MemorandumSL explained the rationale for the document which will be placed on the portal for Director’s information.This gives details of the processes used by the auditors. |
| 11.0 Date of Meetings for the Academic Year |
| Presented by: | Clerk |
| 15 December 202209 March 202313 July 2023All at 5.00pm |
| 12.0 Feedback from the Executive Performance Review Panel |
| Presented by: | Chair |
| ***See confidential minutes*** |

**Meeting ended at 6.15pm**

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| **Approved as a True record of the Meeting** |
| **Signed:** |  |
|  | **Chair** |

**Appendix One**

**Questions submitted prior to the meeting and responses provided.**

**Standards**: Siddal and Field Lane are missing their RWM targets. Whilst this is an obvious immediate concern are there any concerns going forward?

The main key areas for development (so the focus for the Trust) going forward are the consistency of the delivery of high quality teaching, the consistency in the quality of the curriculum and the schools leaders and teachers ability to effectively communicate their narrative of the school’s development (particularly the curriculum) to the inspectorate. The school’s improvement plans are focused on these areas, as is the work of the Trust.

Siddal - if a Section 8 inspection happened tomorrow would inspectors be able to see that the SIP was being implemented successfully and showing progress/improvement?

They would, the standards of curriculum planning, teaching and pupil behaviour have all improved since the last inspection, as has the school’s adherence to strong safeguarding practices (an issue in the previous inspection). Reviews conducted by Trust leaders and Michelle Joyce evidence development.

RHS - given the review where would you put the school if an inspection came tomorrow?

I believe the school would have a very strong chance of receiving a Section 8 inspection judgement that stated ‘if the inspection team returned in the next 12 months the school is likely to be outstanding’. It should be noted that this his is very much dependent on the school’s next round of GCSE results.

Looking at the primaries there seems to be a common theme around planning - FL - "monitoring planning", SPS - "clarity of planning" and LF "planning as learning objectives" - is there sufficient support to address this?

Yes. Matt Crowther and Rebecca Denham are both focused on these priorities alongside the point made above regarding Ofsted preparedness. The Trust have set-up subject specialist teams, bringing these teams together fortnightly to plan in partnership. The Trust team are also leading the system of QA (alongside the Heads of School) as this work is being completed by the teachers from across the schools.

**Budget**: What are the Published Admission Numbers (Limit) for each school?

It should be noted that the numbers for reception classes pupils joining our primaries in September 2022, will be released on the 12th April.

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| School | Pupil Admission Limit |
| Rastrick High School | 345\* (2022 confirmed as 360) |
| Field Lane Primary School | 27 |
| Siddal Primary School | 30 |
| Luddendenfoot Academy | 26\* |
| \*Both Rastrick and Luddendenfoot have grown beyond the PAL in previous years to support local families and the LA  |

**Centralised Finance Dept**: How is recruitment going - are we confident of getting a good field. If we are two staff down how is that impacting on the department currently?

Recruitment is still taking place. We have engaged with Hays to support the process. Sarah is interviewing candidates this week.

**Stakeholder Engagement**: Are there any plans to engage any other stakeholders i.e. residents, local businesses given that a school is often seen as the centre of a community?

We are looking at how we can use current structures  / local bodies to engage with our communities. For example, I have engaged with Active Calderdale and attended a community event to strengthen the school’s in the Trust partnership with local charities and businesses. This partnership is supporting us working with partners in various fields - everything from Cromwell Bottom Nature Reserve to Castlefield golf club. We have also formed a community Board in Rastrick as part of the new 3G and changing pavilion development. This Board has the chairs of Huddersfield Town Foundation, Rastrick Juniors Football club and Clifton Rangers Football Club. We are looking to expand the board to encompass more local clubs.

Finally - and I'll probably ask this every meeting - are we still on target to achieve good in phonics across the Primaries by Sept 2022 and Good across the board by 2024 as indicated in the minutes of the previous meeting.

Yes. The focus on this area is being seen in the improved teaching seen in the last reviews.

FLP is that right that the year 6 cohort is only 6?

Yes

Overall is FLP only at half capacity?

There are currently 106 pupils at the school (their capacity is 189).

 What is the impact on this on the school generally in terms of meeting targets, being able to implement the SIP etc.

The school’s staffing structure is such that classes are taught together (for example year 1 and Year 2 are taught together). This mitigates against the pupils numbers versus teachers’ salaries.

The school is fully staffed to this end and the leadership team is structured in a traditional way (Head of School plus a Senior Leader).  Traditionally a Head of School in a school this size would teach within the formal curriculum. I took the decision to not do this because a. To ensure that the Head of School had every opportunity to fully implement the SIP b. To ensure that the Trust’s new systems of CPD and QA could be embedded quickly c. The school Ofsted inspection is imminent and to ensure the school is well prepared for this, I have allocated additional support from Matt Crowther Director of School Improvement to support the Head of School.

is there a specific formal recruitment strategy?

Yes. The strategy in brief is below:

* First and foremost, it’s about achieving a good from Ofsted and promoting this effectively to potential parents. When we achieve this the result will form part of a promotional campaign through social media and the local press
* Capital investment to improve the building façade (aligned with a subsidised CIF building bid). This will form part of a promotional campaign through social media and the local press
* Wrap around care to be introduced in September 2023 (promoted to potential parents from September 2022 to take advantage of applications to reception)

Salterlee. At the last meeting we discussed ensuring the new Trust had time to consolidate and ensure it was achieving the aims for the current academies, before expanding. What is the driver for adding another school now? What would it bring to the Trust?

I believe the statement agreed to by the Board was to ‘grow with care’. The school represents an opportunity to adopt a local academy. In Calderdale the vast majority of primary schools are LA led. As a single academy trust (SAT) the processes around adoption are relatively straight forward. We have also successfully adopted three academies in one go, so one small academy will not present a capacity problem for the central team. Furthermore, the academy is full  (PAN) and has a good from Ofsted. In summary the academy would bring the Trust:

* A strong partner in terms of education
* A strong partner in terms of reputation
* A strong partner who sends significant numbers of their Year 6 cohort to Rastrick High School

Is there a future strategic plan for growth in terms of type of school and secondary/primary and how would this fit into that?

The target is 10 schools in 5 years. It is a broad statement because the market for schools / academies is so unpredictable. This broad target does not restrict the Trust Board in considering the adoption of schools as they make approaches / we approach them / the RSC approaches the Trust. In short, Salterlee fits into the growth plan because it is a Calderdale school.

**Scheme of Delegation** - has anything changed from last year?

No. the scheme of delegation approved in the summer term stands.

**CEO Standards Report** - phonics at Siddal. Can you assure Directors that the strategies in place will address this in the next year(s)?

- KS1, obviously we are not satisfied with "national average" Again can you assure Directors that these results will improve following planned interventions?

I am confident as the culture and systems are in place to ensure that teaching is consistently strong. Allied to this the staff are now receiving much  better training and CPD than they received from the previous Trust.

- KS2, similar to above with Field Lane and national average. Also, that results at Siddal will improve in the coming years.

The turnaround in Key Stage 2 results will be gradual impact, as improved culture, systems and staff are embedded into the school / practice. I would also say that these pupils have a. seen disruption to their Key Stage 2 diet because of the pandemic and b. Have been in schools led by a Trust who were not clear on the strategies that best impact pupil progress. As I have stated above, the culture and systems are now in place that directly impact on the consistent delivery of good or better teaching.

- GCSE results are excellent and a testament to the continuing hard work and following proven procedures and interventions. I am particularly pleased with the closing of the DS gap.

- cost of living, all very laudable and considered but I just wonder about the  classification of "in need." I know it is difficult and a sensitive area but forecasts are that those families/pupils not recognised "in need" by way of Pupil Premium and free school meals etc will still struggle in the coming months. Is there any way that we can identify such and sensitively take action?

These pupils / families are identified by the pastoral staff in our schools because they have a deep knowledge of their  pupils / families / communities and their circumstances. In short, where we see as need we will connect families to those who can provide it and/or (within reason) provide financial assistance.

**Stakeholder Engagement** - this is a new document/plan and is a good starting point. Some of the actions are already undertaken whilst others are new. The collation, analysis, interpretation and actions are going to be key. Agreed.

Parents - what is the % return now?

In secondary school parental feedback post parents evening is 80%. The figure is slightly higher in our primaries.

Is this figure (whatever it may be) acceptable?

The  marketing / survey industry states that an up take on a survey above 50% is excellent

Are there any plans/strategies to increase uptake?

If we can replicate the figures we are currently achieving then it will give us a strong cross section of parents from each of our schools.

School communities - this, I think, is the most difficult area to get right and I wondered if there were any scope to increase the number and breadth of these, for example Together Housing, GP surgeries (the one at Rastrick for example), local residents, local businesses/shopkeepers, suppliers etc. I know they are sometimes hard to reach and may have little relevance and/or not offer useful feedback, but have we considered these?

I have and to be honest, I have not prioritised the wider community whilst I have been planning for staff, pupil and parent feedback. I would say that I have contacted together housing as part of the community group wot at field lane, but I’m yet to receive a response.

**Growth Plan** - I know you like ambitious targets but is 20 schools by 2032 not a little too ambitious? That would effectively be 15 more schools in 9 years, given Salterlee joining next year. I seem to remember that the White Paper had a suggested ideal number of schools (total pupils) but thought it was lower than 20?

It is, but (as always) there is a fair amount of ambition in the plan. The most recent guidance from the government is that ‘in future they’ll expect most trusts to run at least 10 schools or 7500 pupils, or at least be working towards it’. If we are to achieve 7500 pupils, then it may be that many of these pupils are primary aged, meaning more schools would be part of the Trust than 10.

Also adopting schools initially that feed in to RHS is, whilst understandable, quite specific - as per the list provided to Sam's question. How realistic is this and are we prepared for the questions when this document is published on the website?

This document (in this format and details) would never be published on the website.

I am writing to all our feeder primary Headteachers, with an offer of a meeting with me to talk broadly about the white paper and what it would be like being part of a local Trust.

Finally, whilst I know some guidelines were issued by the DfE, I think turning the website monochrome with the black ribbon in the corner is very effective and respectful.

As always, Jamie the Trust Marketing Manager has pitched our response perfectly.

Thank you for this very helpful report. Results overall appear strong, well done to all involved. The biggest concern appears to be Siddal’s key stage 2 reading and maths. I am pleased to see there will be stronger support and intervention planned for pupils at Siddal with SEND and vulnerable pupils. Are we confident that the quality of teaching and the curriculum will meet the needs of the pupils at Siddal as we move forward?

We are confident the quality of teaching will improve the more time the teaching and support staff have (under Trust direction and support) to develop their curriculum planning and pedagogy. The curriculum is in a much stronger place then it has ever been and is continual focus for the CPD sessions planned at Siddal through the year. Alongside the issues already highlighted, teaching stability played a big part in the results in 2022. The school now has a stable teaching team, that will only grow in expertise.

GCSE Attainment for appears strong this year at Rastrick. It will be interesting to see the progress figures when they are available.

Agreed, the national Progress 8 release is Tuesday 20 September.