

THE MARLOW EDUCATION TRUST

MINUTES of the **MEETING** of the **MET Board**
held at **Sir William Borlase's Grammar School** on
Monday 17 October 2022 at 6.00pm

PRESENT: Mr I Duguid
Mr A Handford
Dr P Holding: CEO
Mr R Krajewski
Miss K Mountfield
Mrs L Parry-Woolnar
Mrs C Redcliffe

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs C Cochran: Governor Support

NB: Trustees' questions and comments are highlighted in ***bold italics*** throughout these minutes.

The meeting commenced at 6.10pm

WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular Mrs Parry-Woolnar, Beechview Headteacher, who was attending her first meeting of the Board. All trustees were present and introductions were made.

ANNUAL

1. Elections

1.1 Chair

In line with their Articles of Association (AoA) (Article 82) Mr Duguid was nominated and duly elected as Chair for a one-year term of office ending, at the latest, on the last day of the Autumn term 2023.

Mr Duguid in the Chair

The Chair thanked the board for their confidence and support.

1.2 Vice Chair

In line with their AoA (Article 82), Mr Handford was nominated and elected as Vice Chair for a one-year term of office ending, at the latest, on the last day of the Autumn term 2023.

1.3 Appointments

The following appointments were agreed for the current academic year:

1.3.1 Data Protection: Mr Krajewski

1.3.2 Safeguarding/Child Protection/LAC: Dr Holding offered to take on this role and arrangements would be made in line with the AoA (Article 51) for the Members to agree to him being appointed a trustee.

PROCEDURAL

2 Notifications of Any Other Business

Nothing was tabled under Any Other Business.

3 Declarations of Interest/Loyalty

There were no new declarations of interest or loyalty but if a subject should compromise a trustee, a decision would be taken on whether it was appropriate for that person to leave the meeting for that discussion.

3.1 Related Information

3.1.1 Business & Pecuniary Interest: It was an annual requirement for all local governors, trustees and staff to review and update their B&PIs.

<p>It was noted that all local governors were using the facility on GHub to declare any business or pecuniary interests (via their individual profiles) and trustees were asked to do the same.</p> <p>There was also a requirement for all trustees to complete a Related Party Transaction form, which would be made available in hard copy.</p> <p>Trustees were reminded that any changes in their circumstances (ie. a business provision with the School, with a 'connected person' or trustee/governorship at another school) which affected any of their related school interests should be advised to the School so the Register of Interests and School website could be updated accordingly.</p>	<p>ACTION</p> <p>All to Action</p> <p>All to Action</p> <p>All to Note</p>
<p>3.1.2 Get Information About Schools (GIAS): it was noted any 'key' governance changes (<i>ATH paras 2.54 through to 2.57 refer</i>) must be made through the DfE's secure GIAS register within 14 days of that change.</p> <p>It was confirmed GIAS was in the process of being updated.</p> <p>3.1.3 Statutory Information on School Websites: the information 'what academies must or should publish on line' had been updated with effect from 5 September 2022 and was available at: Guidance.</p> <p>Discussion followed about the need for the MET to have its' own website, with links to the websites of the schools within the MET. It was noted the CEO and Deputy Headteacher, SWBGS had carried out some work on this: the Board AGREED a sum of £2,500 could be spent on this work continuing and being finalised.</p> <p>It was proposed there should be a review of all the MET's websites.</p>	<p>CEO</p>
<p>4 Previous Minutes</p> <p>4.1 Minutes of Meeting</p> <p>The Minutes of the Trust Board meeting held on 5 July 2022, having been made available on GHub, were CONFIRMED as a correct record.</p> <p>A hard copy of the minutes was signed by the Chair and passed to the Headteacher, SWBGS to be made available for public inspection upon request.</p> <p>4.2 Any Matters Arising</p> <p>4.2.1 page 2, minute 3.2.2 refers: it was confirmed the Members had appointed a third Member following the death of one of the MET's original Members. An extract from the ATH para 1.3 was noted '<i>... the Department's strong preference is that trusts should have at least five members</i>'.</p> <p>4.2.2 page 2, minute 3.2.3 refers: Mr Handford had not yet been able to find an address for Mrs Dollin.</p> <p>4.2.3 page 2, minute 3.2.6 refers: it was confirmed that safeguarding training for local governors had been delivered at Beechview. SWBGS local governors had received their safeguarding training at their Governors' Day.</p> <p>4.2.4 page 8, minute 14.4 refers: nothing further had been heard following the approach made to Beechview to join the Abbey View Trade Union.</p> <p>Any further Matters Arising from the Minutes had either been addressed or were on the agenda for this meeting.</p>	
REVIEWS	
<p>5 Annual</p> <p>5.1 Scheme of Delegation</p> <p>A copy of the revised Beechview Scheme of Delegation (SoD) had been made available on GHub and was APPROVED, subject to review by trustees.</p>	<p>All to Action</p>

No changes had been made to the SWBGS or 'Outstanding School' SoDs.

ACTION

It was agreed there should be a review of which policies were trust-wide, in line with the SoDs.

Gov.Supp

It was felt there was a need to understand the role of trustees within a MAT. Details of governance roles within an academy/MAT could be found in the DfE's 'Academy Trust Governance Structures and Role Descriptors' [here](#).

All to Note

5.2 MET Standing Orders

The Board reviewed and **ADOPTED** their Standing Orders on behalf of the Trust.

5.3 MET Governance Allowance Policy

The Board reviewed and **ADOPTED** their Governance Allowance Policy on behalf of the Trust.

5.4 MET Governance Code of Conduct

The MET's Governance Code of Conduct 2022/23 had been reviewed and adapted on behalf of the Trust. The Board **ADOPTED** the revised Code of Conduct as made available on GHub noting that all those responsible for governance within the Trust should:

* read the agreed Code of Conduct;

* should confirm via the facility on GHub that they agreed to abide by the Code;

It was noted that:

* it was good practice for any observers attending any governance meeting within the Trust to read and agree to the Code;

* the Board would review the Code of Conduct on an annual basis.

All to Action

5.5 MET Committee Terms of Reference

In line with the annual requirement in the AoA (Article 101) the Board reviewed and **ADOPTED** the Terms of Reference for the MET's Ad Hoc Committees/Panels (HR Related (Staffing) and Complaints), Pay Review and Pupil Discipline).

5.6 MET Risk Register

The Chair of Beechview's LGB had shared a letter he had received from the DfE explaining: '*The Secretary of State has a new power effective from 1 September 2022 as set out in the Coasting Schools (England) Regulations 2022 that allows the Department to intervene in schools and academies that are coasting (not making necessary improvements)*' [:here](#).

It was pointed out that if Beechview were to receive a third RI judgement it could be removed from the MET to join another MAT: no action was required at this point but trustees should be aware if this were to happen it could damage the reputation of both the MET and SWBGS.

To Note

5.7 Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2022

As noted at the Summer term meeting the revised KCSiE 2022 had come into effect from 1 September 2022. Changes were listed in annex F (page 174), these included:

: all governors/trustees to receive safeguarding training at induction stage;

: detail on the impact of domestic abuse on children;

: more guidance on Prevent and how to recognise;

: 'child-on-child abuse' replacing 'peer-on-peer abuse' for more clarity.

A copy of KCSiE 2022 had been made available on GHub and the facility set up for all those responsible for governance to confirm they had read the document and understood their responsibilities.

All to Action

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT REPORTS

6 Report of the CEO

The Chair thanked the CEO for his report which had been circulated to all trustees.

The CEO had suggested the Schools within the MET pay a minimum 2% annual 'top slice' of their budgets in order to support central MET services and allow for commissioning of external services. A list had been included which would leave an unallocated sum of approximately £20,000 if the proposal were adopted. It was added that in a number of MATs the average 'top slice' was 5%.

Such a fund would provide strategic resource, support direction and financial planning for the future, benefitting the Schools within the Trust: the Board **AGREED** in principle.

Discussion followed that there could be a time when more funding would be directed to one school over another but such an arrangement could be reversed. In answer to a question, it was suggested that the Beechview surplus would not be shared and that reserves were not 'pooled'. It was agreed that clarity and further discussion was required on how any surplus monies would be spent. It was suggested the CEO and the respective Headteachers discuss this further and the issue be delegated to the Finance Committee.

**CEO/
HTs Beechview
& SWBGS/
Fin.Comm**

It was pointed out it had been necessary for the MET to deal with some major issues linked to Beechview. In addition, there had been an ongoing situation with the MET's Finance team. It was queried whether the MET had been challenging enough: however, the DfE recognised the work the MET had done with Beechview and a central fund could pay for services to support Beechview's validation. In light of the issue highlighted under minute no. 5.6 the Trust Board had to satisfy itself that Beechview was doing all they could to raise improvement.

Question: do we have an indication of what RI looks like with regards to behaviour, curriculum etc?

Answer: we can see a case for additional resources to improve those areas.

It was explained that Challenge Partners had been supportive and Mrs Parry added that staff now followed trauma led training. A more holistic approach to behaviour for learning was being introduced but some staff were yet to fully engage.

It was noted that special needs students were discussed by staff at the respective schools and it was agreed systems should be linked. SWBGS had built up their SEND support to make it more structured: Beechview were doing the same but required more time as they had a new SEND team.

The Chair of the Beechview LGB had conducted a review against the Challenge Partners report and the most recent Ofsted: the results had been disappointing but it was confirmed Beechview would accept anyone visiting the School to ask questions. There was a strong case for teachers to gain more confidence. This all linked to reputational risks for the whole MET.

Restricted Confidential Minutes refer

Future Developments: all agreed that the MET had originally been formed with an aim to develop a 'family' of schools within Marlow. It was suggested it would be advantageous to take on more schools and move away from the initial plan. Discussion followed and it was felt there should be similarity or common locality with any schools approached.

The Headteacher, SWBGS confirmed that she was due to meet the Headteacher of Great Marlow School (GMS) during the week of this meeting and would raise the issue with him again at that time: it was known that the Headteacher, GMS had been in contact with local primary schools. It was suggested the MET pursue a campaign of contacting secondary schools amongst which Highcrest, High Wycombe was proposed, who already had a link with Beechview. It was understood due diligence would be required if any arrangement were to be progressed.

It was felt there was a need to establish the plans of Danesfield School and it was proposed a meeting be arranged to include their Headteacher and Chair of Governors along with the MET's CEO, the Headteacher, SWBGS and Mr Krajewski.

To Action

It was agreed there should be a concentrated effort to engage with local or similar schools, establish their plans and set a timetable of action

7 Local Governing Boards

7.1 Sir William Borlase's GS

It was noted that the LGB had met on 10 October 2022 and the minutes would be made available to all trustees.

7.1.1 Approval of LGB Chair/Vice Chair: it was noted that the LGB had elected Mrs Redcliffe as Chair of the LGB and Mrs Towell as Vice Chair. The Board **ENDORSED** these appointments.

7.1.2 LGB Chair Update: the LGB Chair reported that the School's exam results had been excellent, showing an upward trend in progress in the majority of subjects. The outcomes in a small number of subjects which were not as expected were thought to have been affected by Covid. Pupil Premium students continued to do well.

There had been a focus on safeguarding, the School's new lead was now established, and the support was comprehensive: this had been well received by students, staff and parents.

Question: when do you anticipate Ofsted?

Answer: sometime this academic year.

Question: will there be any downward pressure on results next year?

Answer: there is talk of the grade boundaries being reduced next year.

7.1.3 Headteacher's Report: a copy of the Headteacher's report had been made available on GHub along with supporting documents. A number of students suffering from anxiety were now back in school, a number on reduced timetables.

It was reported there had been a slight dip in sixth form numbers: some of those in Year 13 had joined the School under the admissions criteria by trying to control those with TAGs. This would be addressed in the forthcoming year.

Question: are the 204 students impacted on due to the subjects?

Answer: we encouraged the intake with a subscription criteria. A new external Head of sixth form has just joined the School and seems to be settling in well.

Question: with regards to Year 8 last year, the current Year 9s, absences are high?

Answer: that was due to a school trip and the code used.

Question: do the letters referenced in the Admissions Policy go out to parents?

Answer: yes, attendance has improved.

7.1.4 Safeguarding Report: a second safeguarding review was to be conducted after the Autumn half-term. The outcome report would be shared at the next meeting of the Trust Board.

7.2 Beechview Academy

It was noted that the LGB had met on 21 September 2022 and the minutes would be made available to all trustees.

7.2.1 Approval of LGB Chair/Vice Chair: it was noted that the LGB had elected Mr Handford as Chair of the LGB and Mr Rowe as Vice Chair. The Board **ENDORSED** these appointments.

7.2.2 Governance Update: the appointment of Mrs Towell and reappointment of Mr Handford, as local governors, had been confirmed by ordinary written resolution of the trustees.

An experienced educationalist, Mrs Hopper, had joined the LGB as an Observer with a view to becoming a local governor.

7.2.3 LGB Chair's Update: the Chair reported that Mrs Parry, Headteacher at Beechview, along with Deputy Headteacher Ms Katie Evans were both settling in well to their new roles.

Agenda

The local governors had completed a SWOT analysis which the SLT would also be asked to complete. A skills audit was also being arranged.

7.2.4 Headteacher's Report: it was reported that the School had lost 8 pupils since the beginning of the year having come into Year 3 and then obtaining a place at their first preference school. There were currently spaces in Years 3 and 5, with 57 pupils in Year 6: however, there were 10 SEND pupils, as well as behaviour issues in Year 6. It was known that the pupil numbers in Year 1 at Marsh, main feeder school were very low. Due to the lower numbers coming through the School it was proposed the admission number for Year 3 should be reduced. It was suggested the Admissions Department at the LA should be contacted in the first instance.

To Action

There was a Ukrainian teacher in Year 4, with one Ukrainian refugee child in Year 5: the School had just received a request to take another Ukrainian pupil. SWBGS currently had two Ukrainian students. It was queried whether there was an opportunity for the Ukrainian teacher to support other schools.

It was noted that 'return to work' interviews had been introduced for staff.

Question: do these tend to be with the same people?

Answer: there are some and one we know is due to stress.

The behaviour for learning had been a change for staff and an overall change of culture at the School. Restorative Justice costs were currently being reviewed. There had been 3 suspensions during the current term and the School had adopted the PRU's positive behavior plans: reintegration was being supported, with staff being positive. It was felt that parents were beginning to recognise the work of the School was being done to support the wellbeing of pupils.

Question: are the children able to recognise what this means?

Answer: yes. We have 8 children on behaviour management plans, it was 3 of them who were suspended.

It was suggested the schools could work together, with SWBGS having a member of staff trained to write EHCPs. Mrs Parry agreed this would be useful, particularly as there were 12 pupils to be assessed and one currently going through appeal.

A low-level safeguarding concerns log had been introduced.

It was noted that the School's data was not at national level but it had not dropped, and the gap had closed. During lockdown the School's remote learning had been exceptional but, as was reflected nationally, Writing had suffered.

Mrs Parry was thanked for her comprehensive report.

7.2.5 Safeguarding Report: there was nothing to add at this meeting

DELEGATED REPORTS

8 Committees

8.1 Finance Committee

The Finance Committee was due to meet on Monday 31 October 2022.

Model Terms of Reference for the Finance Committee, incorporating Audit & Risk, had been made available for the committee's consideration.

Fin.Comm
Agenda

It was noted that, further to an audit, it appeared more monies were available, but this was yet to be determined and was currently being treated with caution. Each school had a Reserves Policy but a risk approach was required to determine a percentage of reserve available. More information should be given at the next meeting.

Agenda

8.1.1 CIF Bids: online applications for CIF bids 2023/24 had now opened, with a deadline for submissions of 12 noon on Wednesday 7 December.

All to Note

8.1.2 Beechview: as noted above, clarity on budget was awaited.

<p>8.1.3 SWBGS: as noted above, clarity on budget was awaited.</p>	<p>ACTION</p>
<p>8.1.4 To Note: the following were drawn to the attention of trustees for their information:</p>	
<p>a) Academy Trust Handbook (ATH): the revised ATH had been issued during the summer holidays and came into effect from 1 September 2022. A copy had been made available in the GHub 'MET Resources folder'.</p>	<p>All to Note</p>
<p>b) Submission Deadlines * Land, Buildings Collection (LBCT) submission by 21 February 2023 * 2021 to 2022 audited financial statement, auditor's management letter, annual summary internal scrutiny report and accounts submission coversheet: submission by 31 December 2022 * Academies accounts return (AR) 2021/22, submission by 19 January 2023 * Audited 2021/22 financial statement published on Trust website by 31 January 2023. * School Resource Management Self-Assessment (SRMSA) 2022/23: to be submitted by 15 March 2023</p>	<p>All to Note</p>
<p>8.2 Buildings Working Group The Buildings Working Group had met and the minutes had been made available on GHub. A further meeting would be held towards the end of the current term.</p>	
<p>It was reported that the outcome of the planning application for the Boathouse continued to look positive. Updates on the Boathouse would be included under SWBGS reports at future meetings.</p>	<p>Gov.Supp/ Agenda</p>
<p>8.3 LGB HR Related Panels, Complaints Panel and Pupil Discipline Panels It had not been necessary to call any of these panels.</p>	
<p>SWBGS had responded to a parental complaint. At this stage there had not been any follow up.</p>	
<p>9 Individual Trustees</p>	
<p>9.1 Chair The Chair had not taken any actions under delegated powers.</p>	
<p>9.2 Data Protection Trustee It was reported there had been one potential issue linked to SWBGS in the previous month which involved some papers related to the 11+ examination being mislaid. The MET's DPO had been informed and had advised no further action was required as the matter did not involve the School's data.</p>	
<p>RECURRING ITEMS</p>	
<p>11 Governor Training All those responsible for governance within the MET were taking advantage of the training made available by the Bucks Education Partnership (BEP).</p>	
<p>10 Policies No trust-wide policies had been made available for review or approval.</p>	
<p>11 Future Meetings Meetings for the remainder of the academic year were noted: : Monday 13 March 2023 : Monday 3 July 2023</p> <p>To be held at 6.00pm at Sir William Borlase's Grammar School: attendees would be advised of any changes.</p>	
<p>12 Any Other Business Nothing had been tabled for discussion.</p>	

Discussions were summarised:
Action regarding MET Website;
Scheme of Delegation and Ofsted readiness;
Support for Beechview;
MET expansion (re. White Paper);
Clarity required regarding surplus funds;
Both GBs look healthy;
Staffing looking positive in both schools.

CONDUCT OF MEETING: Trustees confirmed that the meeting had been conducted in an open manner and that all trustees had been invited to participate and contribute to discussions. It was confirmed that all members of the Trust Board would have access to these minutes.

Please note these minutes are not a verbatim account but are a summary of discussions and decisions made at the meeting for the purpose of public record/inspection. Any confidential minutes would not be made available for public inspection.

*There being no further business, **the meeting closed at 9.00pm***