

**Peterborough Diocese Education Trust**  
Company Number 08509710  
**Board of Directors**  
**Minutes of the Meeting,**  
**held on 26 January 2021, 2pm**  
**VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM**

<b>Attendance Key:</b>		✓ = present; A = apologies received and accepted; ApN = apologies received but not accepted; Ab = absent; R = resigned							
<b>Name</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>01/10/20</b>	<b>26/11/20</b>	<b>10/12/20</b>	<b>04/01/21</b>	<b>26/01/21</b>	<b>23/03/21</b>	<b>18/05/21</b>	<b>20/07/21</b>
Cathy Armstrong (CA)	Director	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Kevin Binley (KB)	Director	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Greg Cracknell (GC)	Director Vice Chair	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Margaret Holman (MH)	Director and Chair of the Board	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Natalie Howes (NH)	Director (Appointed 26/9/19)	A	✓	✓	A	✓			
Jan Martin (JM)	Director (Appointed 12/19)	A	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Duncan Mills (DM)	Director/CEO	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Andrew Scarborough (AS)	Director (Appointed 26/9/19)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Anup Sodhi (ASi)	Director (Appointed 8/04/20)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Dr Gordon Temple (GT)	Director	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Andrew Weatherill (AW)	Director	A	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Attendance %: this meeting		73%	100%	100%	91%	100%			
Attendance %: year to date		73%	86%	91%	91%	93%			
		<p><b>In attendance:</b> Helen Buckley,(HB) Director/ Legal Advisor and Governance, Admissions and Safeguarding Lead, PDET Lee Hughes (LH), Director Business &amp; Finance, Ruth Walker-Green (RWG), Director of Learning &amp; Achievement</p> <p>Maxine Ward, Independent Clerk and Governance Professional, Hallam Learning Consultancy</p>							

## 1. WELCOME AND PROCEDURAL

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. GC led the opening prayers.
- 1.2 There were no apologies.
- 1.3 **Declarations of Interest**

The following Directors/attendees declared standing interests as members of Academy Governance Committees (AGCs):

- Greg Cracknell: Freemans and Pytchley
- Gordon Temple: Welford, Sibbertoft and Sulby Endowed School and Barby School
- Cathy Armstrong: St Andrew's
- Natalie Howes: Freemans and St Barnabas Schools

### Other Interests

- Greg Cracknell **had** declared a **standing interest** that he was a Member of the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) and Chair of the DBE Resource Management Committee.

## 2. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Chair confirmed that:

- The majority of reports would be verbal on this occasion
- Items on the action log would be reviewed at the meeting on March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021; the action to review the delegation on school closures had been overtaken by the ongoing national position.
- A Director's safeguarding visit had taken place with HB. A written report would be provided to the Ethos, Standards and Effectiveness Committee.

The CEO provided an update on Covid matters.

### 2.1 CEO's Reports

#### 2.1.1 Risk Register

This had been circulated in advance together with an explanatory note. The CEO drew Directors attention to the impact of threats to funding streams. Conversations were ongoing with Headteachers and further information was provided in the financial update below.

#### **THE BOARD RECEIVED THE RISK REGISTER NOTING THE UPDATES**

#### 2.1.2 CEO's Verbal Updates

The CEO spoke to the headings on the agenda. The following points were noted:

Meeting with Members of BEC Future Free School bids, notably two would be coming up in Wellingborough. PDET had expressed interest but there was no further information at present. In response to a question, it was confirmed that Nicholas Hawksmoor Trust had succeeded in the Towcester Free School bid.

RWG and the CEO had met Andy Wolfe Deputy Director of Education for the Church of England. The CoE was putting together a bid to deliver the National Professional Qualifications and PDET were asked to support and take part in the delivery should it be successful.

The Trust ICT strategy was moving forward albeit more slowly than expected.

The TUPE meetings were conducted at Sywell. There were no issues raised re staff transfer as terms and conditions would be the same. The NEU had balloted members about strike action. It was reported in the local press and the radio. A press statement had been issued.

**It was confirmed that the Trust Land and Buildings Return was completed and submitted to the DfE in line with requirements.**

Peter Cantley and DM had received reports from the Diocesan School Consultants where they had had chance to meet with Headteachers. Some meetings between the Headteachers and DSCs had not yet taken place due to Covid issues.

28 March would be the date for the final separation from the Diocese ICT System. A project plan had been put together and would be signed off by the DBF. Solutions had been found for printing and VOIP in MS Teams and costs would be minimised from the migration. Everything would be cloud based.

### **2.1.3 Health & Safety**

Preparation had started in November 2020 for audits which would be undertaken by Willis Towers Watson (WTW) on behalf of the Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) for schools. The RPA provided the Trust's insurance. The review was ongoing and meetings had taken place between the CET, Plumsun, S2E and the auditor. WTW would also visit 10% of schools in the Trust, in PDET's case this would be 3 schools: Greens Norton, St Marys and Braunston. In response to a question, the CEO confirmed that the schools were identified because they had a good infrastructure, Health and Safety audits had been carried out and S2E had completed work. The school business managers would be able to respond and take pressure off the Headteachers. All schools had agreed to take part. The intention was that the audit should be a learning experience.

LH explained the rating and confirmed that overall, at Trust level, the outcomes were expected to be good. The purpose was to enable continuous improvement and work to reduce risks.

The CEO finished his reports by sharing an African proverb that the RSC had shared: 'If you want to go fast go alone, if you want to go far, go together.'

### **2.2. Remote learning**

RWG provided a verbal update on Remote Learning across the Trust. She explained the new legal duty to deliver remote provision and explained the support that Headteachers had been given. The checklists (circulated) were aligned with DfE expectations. Many of the actions had been set out in September and much had already been completed in PDET schools. The Academy Improvement Officers were using the checklists to inform challenge and support.

RWG reported that the remote provision was significantly improved since the beginning of lockdown in March 2020 and assurance was provided that the schools were delivering at least the minimum hours required at each Key Stage. There was an expectation that schools would follow daily timetables as far as possible.

All schools were delivering some live teaching; St James was delivering 'all day' live teaching as this worked in their context. Others were delivering a mix of live and recorded learning sessions, drawing on national resources where these were helpful.

23/31 schools had a single interactive platform with all resources in one place:

- 13 schools were using MS Teams
- 4 schools, the G Suite
- 10 schools were accessing other platforms suitable for primary provision such as Seesaw.

4 schools were not planning to move to any platform as it was reported that parents were happy with provision being delivered. These schools would be monitored to ensure needs were met. There was now a recognition that 'quality first teaching' could be delivered remotely and there was less reliance on PowerPoint. Feedback strategies were being developed and sessions were being provided and delivered for groups of children and schools were also delivering on catch up interventions and these needed to be balanced with capacity.

There was a range of delivery models; some schools had all teachers at home, with TAs in school. This was usually where the school internet/broadband connections were weak and connectivity was better from home.

4/5 larger schools that benefitted from 2 teachers in one year group, would have one delivering onsite and one delivering remote learning off site.

The remainder of schools would deliver simultaneously to children onsite and offsite.

The second document was the Trust Template for remote learning based on the DfE format. This had supported Headteachers and as a published document would support consistency and quality across the whole Trust.

Monitoring remote education was being managed through a phased approach, acknowledging the potential impact on staff wellbeing. Academy Improvement Officers (AIOs) would focus on:

1. The remote education checklist
2. Monitoring platforms quantity and quality of remote learning provided
3. Monitoring live teaching; headteachers would do this before the AIOs
4. Catch up and intervention.

Directors asked if there were any concerns about those who had not adopted an interactive platform. RWG explained they believed they had a working solution. 2 were using Tapestry and that required email interaction with parents. Feedback from parents was positive. It would remain under discussion and review with AIOs recognising the challenges Headteachers were dealing with.

Directors asked what happened where pupils had difficulty in engaging with the remote provision. It was explained that schools were monitoring access and engagement and one of criteria in identifying vulnerable children was if they were not accessing provision, they should attend school. RWG explained that in one school had given out devices and 9 children were still not accessing provision. Conversations would take place with parents and children be asked to attend school. This had difficulties as many schools were at capacity with 33% or more attendance on site.

A further question asked what plans were in place to share best practice in remote learning and platforms. Opportunities had taken place at cluster level but this would be developed. The Headteachers' development day in February would be the next opportunity.

Directors agreed that the provision had developed and it was reported it was far more interactive and engaging. Safeguarding was also supported by the ability for teachers to see the children online.

It was noted that there had been on complaint submitted to Ofsted following Gavin Williamson's invitation to

parents, but the matter had been addressed by the school. Overall feedback was positive.

#### **RWG WAS THANKED FOR HER UPDATE**

### **3. FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT & MONITORING**

Directors thanked LH for the reconciliation of the changes which were transparent and helpful.

Conversations were continuing with schools regarding their budget progress.

Schools that were relying on extended provision to sustain themselves were struggling to achieve the approved budget numbers. Additional income was not coming from events and lettings etc. £250k was the current estimate of shortfall to income streams. Expenditure was being well controlled.

A Director asked if it be possible to show income as positive and expenditure as negative. Deficit/Surplus line would then be easier to interpret. LH would adapt the presentation to cover this in future.

**Action 1: LH to adjust the presentation of reports to show income as positive and expenditure as negative**

Directors raised questions and discusses the volatility in the creditors from month to month. LH explained this had been related mainly to payroll which was paid by cash from the centre and then recovered from academies. This was showing in the creditors and was a one-off timing issue between October/November.

LH explained that the timing of funding also added to the volatility in cash flow. It was agreed that LH would provide year to year comparisons which would enable Directors to better monitor the position.

**Action 2: LH to provide annual monthly comparisons for cashflow**

#### **Free School Meals**

LH reported that schools were encouraged and most were providing vouchers through the National Voucher Scheme as this provided parents with best value to purchase food.

Where food packs were being provided, negotiations had taken place with the Trust's main provider, ABM and LH was comfortable that the packs offered were fair.

LH confirmed that the Trust was contractually obliged to support the provider through this period.

### **2. BOARD'S ORGANISATIONAL MATTERS**

#### **4.1 Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of 26 November and 10 December 2020 were approved.

An amendment to the minutes of 4 January was proposed and the minutes would be revised and added to Governor Hub. Subject to this amendment the minutes of 4 January were also approved.

#### **4.2 Dates of Future meetings**

The next Board meeting dates were noted as:

23 March 2021; 18 May 2021; 20 July 2021.

PDET Strategy Reviews would take place on 18 February and 22 April 2021.

*The meeting closed at 2.45pm*

Chair

Date 4.1.21