

Minutes of the Diverse Academies Trust Board Meeting 2 February 2022 at 5pm, via Microsoft Teams

Quorum Required: 3
Trustees Present: 5

Trustee name	Initials	A = absence
Mrs M Blore	MB	
Mr M Quigley MBE (Chair)	MQ	
Mr J Rolph	JR	
Mr D Schwarz	DS	
Mr R Shearing	RS	A
Mr I Storey	IS	

In attendance (staff or other invited persons):

Staff name	Initials	Role	A = Absence
Mr D Cotton	DC	Chief Executive Officer and Accounting Officer	
Mrs J Harrison Hill	JHH	Company Secretary and Governance Professional	

Agenda item number	Item	Action by who/when
1 DAT/67/2122	Apologies for absence Apologies for absence were received and agreed from Mr R Shearing.	
2 DAT/68/2122	Declaration of interest and notification of any changes to declaration made There were no declarations of interest, either direct or indirect, for any items of business on the agenda. The Chair asked if anyone had any further declarations to update. No further declarations were made.	
3 DAT/69/2122	Approve minutes of the meeting dated Wednesday 08 December 2021 The minutes of the meeting, having previously been received were agreed by the Chair.	
4 DAT/70/2122	Matters Arising: DAT/18/2122 Discretionary Leave Policy Action: Clerk send back to policy lead with comments and informing them that this has not been approved. To remain as matter arising until next policy review. DAT/24/2122 KCSIE – one trustee unable to sign declaration until completed new safeguarding certificate. This item is now complete.	

	<p>DAT/28/2122 Statutory Training- Safeguarding and GDPR Action: One trustee to complete Safeguarding and GDPR Training has been completed.</p> <p>DAT/45/2122 6.3 Audit and Risk Committee update Action: Internal Scrutiny report to be distributed to Trustees for approval. Report emailed to trustees on 15/12/2021. Complete.</p> <p>DAT/52/2122 Self Evaluation review Action: Trustees to complete and return to Clerk prior to next Board Meeting on Wednesday 2 February 2022. Committees will continue to work on their areas and complete for this date. See agenda item 5</p> <p>DAT/53/2122 Trustee Resignation Action: Letter from Chair of Board to Mr P Mabbott Letter sent 14 December 2021. This item is now complete.</p>	
5 DAT/71/2122	<p>Self-Evaluation Review Document: <i>Board Self Evaluation review 2021-22</i> was previously received by the Board. Trustees discussed that the Audit and Risk Committee and Governance and Partnership Committee meetings has not yet taken place, the relevant sections for review are on the committee agendas for the next meetings. Trustees agreed to review the full document once these committees have completed their sections. Trustees discussed the process as being an ongoing review cycle building on the external governance review carried out by Browne Jacobson in December 2019 and the Corporate Governance audit carried out by ICCA in February 2021. The Trustees skills audit carried out in January 2022 will be reviewed at the next Governance and Partnership committee. Action: Review of complete self-evaluation and develop action plan at Board meeting 30 March 2022.</p>	Trustees
6 DAT/72/2122	<p>Chief Executive Officers Report Document: <i>CEO Board report February 2022</i> was previously received by the Board. The CEO report provided an update summary report on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vision, ethos and strategic direction of the organisation - Educational performance of the organisation and its pupils - Financial and business performance of the organisation <p>Mr Cotton referred to the CEO Board report and drew Trustees attention to the introduction section referring to a potential MAT inspection by Ofsted, explaining the two stages. Stage 1: individual inspections of schools, followed by stage 2, a review of the wider operations of the MAT. Work is underway to bring together the relevant documents for accessibility. Following discussion on the MAT inspection process Trustees agreed to have an agenda item at the next Board meeting to review. Action: Agenda item: MAT Ofsted review, for Board meeting held on 30 March 2022.</p>	JHH

	<p>Mr Cotton proceeded to highlight from the CEO report Covid and the ongoing response to the challenges which this presents. Updating Trustees with an example of Yeoman Park Primary School currently has 16 staff off. The Holgate Academy was declared an outbreak school again this week with 90 students and staff off with Covid. Work continues with Public Health England and the Local Authority.</p> <p>Trustees were asked if there were any further questions regarding the CEO report. No further questions were raised.</p>	
<p>7</p> <p>DAT/73/2122</p>	<p>Strategic objectives Autumn term review</p> <p>Document: <i>Diverse Academies Trust Strategic Plan 2021-2026</i> and <i>DAT Strategic Objectives Feb 2022</i> were previously received by the Board.</p> <p>Mr Cotton confirmed that the subcommittees of the Board have been reviewing the evaluations and summaries for Term 1.</p> <p>The summary shows the evaluation for Term 1 and expectations for Term 2 have been populated.</p> <p>Trustees commented that the summary indicates on target and asked Mr Cotton if that was the view for executives and leaders or if there were any areas which had not progressed as would have expected. Mr Cotton confirmed that they were pleased with the review and progress to date considering the challenges of Covid. Governance strategy is still progressing through meetings with Academy Committee Chairs and the Governance conference had been delayed due to omicron rise but is due to be held in March. One area where it had not moved as quickly was wider community engagement this is a key priority for this term.</p> <p>Trustees commented that this report provides a clear overview process and gives the opportunities to ask relevant targeted questions at the committee meetings and Board with committees also having the strategic objective as a standing agenda item.</p>	
<p>8</p> <p>DAT/74/2122</p>	<p>Committee Meeting Update from Chairs</p> <p>8.1 Standards and Outcomes Committee update (12/01/2022)</p> <p>Mr Schwarz, Chair of the Standards and Outcomes Committee updated the Board on work carried out by the committee and matters discussed:</p> <p>The committee had received a presentation on safeguarding, mental health, peer-on-peer harassment and sexual violence, with a noted increase of mental health issues and significant measures to address these.</p> <p>Mr Schwarz explained that discussion had taken place on how information regarding safeguarding, mental health and peer-on-peer harassment and sexual violence is captured and the committee has confidence in the work being carried out.</p> <p>The committee had discussed the project in Mansfield and Ashfield working with The Delta Trust, the benefits this brings to the MAT and opportunities to share best practice.</p> <p>The full Ofsted report for Bracken Lane Primary and the Ofsted summary report for Thrumpton Primary were received and the committee had asked for their appreciation and</p>	

<p>DAT/75/2122</p>	<p>recognition of the hard work to be fed back to staff through the Chief Education Officers.</p> <p>8.2 Finance and Resources Committee update (19/01/2022)</p> <p>Mr Rolph, Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee updated the Board on work carried out by the committee and matters discussed:</p> <p>Mr Rolph expressed concern to the Board that the Committee was down to only two Trustees but acknowledged that continuing to try to recruit Trustees. Mr Davies who resigned from the Trustee role due to work commitments has agreed to become a Member.</p> <p>The Board were updated that the financial situation of the Trust is good, along with cashflow and forecasting for the year. The Committee meeting was used to focus on longer term strategy, with a presentation for Site and Capital and IT, noting that the School Allocation Funding is not sufficient to cover the Trusts capital needs. Funding grants such as Section 106 money is being explored and using General Annual Grant funding to cover repairs and renewals.</p> <p>The Committee reviewed the funding allocation for the next few years and agreed a notional allocation.</p> <p>The finance department staffing structure and qualifications were reviewed to ensure adequate staff throughout finance function, ensuring experience and depth to cover promotions or leavers.</p> <p>The Trust has achieved the SchoolMark accreditation scheme developed in consultation with the DfE and Institute of School Business Leaders. SchoolMark accreditation celebrates running an efficient resource model based on a sound strategy. Only five Trusts have been accredited so far of which the Trust is one. This achievement clearly demonstrates the journey of improvement over the last five years.</p>	
<p>DAT/76/2122</p>	<p>Policies approved at committees:</p> <p>Standards and Outcomes Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Medical Conditions Policy - Provider Access Policy - Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy <p>Trustees noted the policies approved.</p>	
<p>DAT/77/2122</p>	<p>Policy for Approval at Board:</p> <p>There were no policies requiring Board approval.</p>	
<p>9 DAT/78/2122</p>	<p>Statutory Updates, Changes to legal documents and Companies House filing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modern Slavery Statement <p>Trustees approved the Modern Slavery Statement and publication of the statement. Mr Quigley gave approval for his electronic signature to be attached to the statement.</p>	
<p>10 DAT/79/2122</p>	<p>Trust Management Accounts –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review financial viability - Review variances between budget and actual income and expenditure - Review KPI's <p>Document: <i>Financial Performance November 2021</i> and <i>Financial Performance Dec 2021</i> were previously received by the Board.</p>	

	<p>Mr Rolph informed the committee that in addition to the update provided under item 8.2 the Committee had reviewed the financial risks to the Trust. The current risks were reasonably minimal and predominately regarding funding, giving an example of the Health and Social Care Levy which the EFSA has not yet confirmed the 1.25% increase will be funded, which is a significant amount of approximately £120k. School Led Tutoring funding is a risk due to funding conditions and potential clawback.</p> <p>The Committee is confident at this stage with the risks identified.</p> <p>Trustees queried if energy increases will impact the Trusts shortly and it was discussed that currently protected by fixed term energy contracts but will impact when they expire and that it was expected that PFI schools will pass these costs on with their charges.</p>	
<p>11 DAT/80/2122</p> <p>DAT/81/2122</p>	<p>Annual Requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Consideration of representations made for Consultation process on Admission arrangements.</u> <p>Document: <i>Response to admission consultation representations</i> was previously received by the Board.</p> <p>Trustees discussed the six responses detailed in the report received for the consultation of admission arrangements.</p> <p>Trustees queried if the number of responses from Nottinghamshire County Council were significant. Mr Cotton confirmed that the number of responses was small and only minor points were raised.</p> <p>Trustees approved the proposed responses and actions to the consultation. The document noting the representations made and Trustees responses to the consultation will be placed on the trust website page for the 2023/24 admission policy process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Determine Admission Arrangements</u> <p>The following documents were previously received by the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bracken Lane Primary Academy appendix to trust admissions policy 2023-2024 - East Leake Academy appendix to trust admissions policy 2023-2024 - Hillock's Academy appendix to trust admissions policy 2023-2024 - Holgate Academy appendix to trust admissions policy 2023-2024 - Queen Elizabeth's Academy appendix to trust admissions policy 2023-2024 - Queen Elizabeth's Academy Supplementary Admissions Form - Retford oaks Academy appendix to trust admissions policy 2023-2024 - Samuel Barlow primary Academy appendix to trust admissions policy 2023-2024 - Thrumpton primary Academy appendix to trust admissions policy 2023-2024 - Tuxford Academy appendix to trust admissions policy 2023-2024 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tuxford Primary Academy appendix to trust admissions policy 2023-2024 - Wainwright primary Academy appendix to trust admissions policy 2023-2024 - Walton Primary Academy appendix to trust admissions policy 2023-2024 <p>The overarching trust policy and all admission appendices above were determined for each academy by the Board and approved.</p>	
12 DAT/82/2122	<p>Trustee items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resignation – A Davies 16/01/2022 <p>The Chair informed trustees that Mr Davies had resigned as a Trustee due to work commitments but had agreed to become a Member.</p> <p>Discussion took place regarding recruiting of Trustees, with the Chair confirming that Academy Ambassadors have been trying to recruit with no success, there remains a live advert on the Academy Ambassadors website.</p> <p>Trustees discussed potential avenues of recruiting including Chief Executive Officers or Executive Leaders of other MAT Trusts, Alumni, developing Governors, Higher Education links, other professional groups.</p> <p>Trustees discussed marketing to give insight into the role of Academy Trust Boards.</p> <p>Action: Mrs Harrison Hill to put together a report for Governance and Partnership Committee to provide an action plan and fresh approach for expanding recruitment of Trustees.</p>	JHH
DAT/83/2122	<p>Chairs correspondence since last meeting:</p> <p>The following documents were previously received by the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EFSA Letter CI-0108085 • Response to CI-0108085 • Follow up email re CI-0108085 • Response to Follow up email CI-0108085 <p>The Chair discussed the above correspondence and confirmed no further correspondence had been received on the matter. No further questions were raised.</p>	
13 DAT/84/2122	<p>Executive items:</p> <p>The following documents were previously received by the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Ofsted Thrumpton Primary Academy 8 & 9 December 2022 (10199528)</i> - <i>Ofsted Inspection Bracken Lane Primary Academy 30 November and 1 December 2022 (10199541)</i> <p>Mr Cotton commented that the Ofsted reports for Thrumpton Primary and Bracken Lane Primary both clearly show that the school improvement journey, despite the challenges of Covid, continues to provide high quality education. Both Ofsted reports provided strong positive feedback.</p> <p>Trustees confirmed the reports were very positive.</p> <p>Action: Chair of Board to write to both schools formally on behalf of the Board to congratulate.</p>	JHH/MQ

DAT/85/2122	CONFIDENTIAL: This item was deemed confidential and was recorded in the confidential minutes.	
14 DAT/86/2122	<p>Determination of confidentiality of business</p> <p>Trustees considered whether anything discussed during the meeting should be deemed as confidential. It was resolved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An Item discussed within agenda item 13 DAT/85/2122 should remain confidential to attendees and Board until the discussed report had been published. <p>Equality Act consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There had been no Equality Act implications <p>Nolan Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attendees were content that all decisions made adhere to the seven Nolan principles. <p>Consider if any items need to be reported to Charities Commission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trustees agreed that there were no items which needed reporting to the Charities Commission. 	
15 DAT/87/2122	Date and time of next meeting: Wednesday 30 March 2022 at Diverse Education Centre, Retford, 5.00pm	

The meeting closed at: 6.18pm

Minutes were agreed on 30/03/2022 minute number: DAT/90/2122