

**The Heath Family (NW) Multi Academy Trust**  
**PART I Minutes of the MAT Board meeting held on**  
**Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> December 2017 at 9.00 am**

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| <b>Present:</b><br>Peter Cook, Sarah Galbraith, David Donnelly, Jane Ainsworth, Rob Pritchard, Steve Rimmer, David Felix, Denise Allen, Judith McConville |  | <b>Apologies:</b><br>Jeremy Barnes, Kris Billington, Ruth Hall                                 |               | <b>Non attenders:</b> |                      |
|   |  |  |               |                       | Clerk: Trish Roberts |
| <b>Items</b>  | <b>Discussion</b>  | <b>Action</b>  | <b>Who</b>    | <b>When</b>           | <b>Notes</b>         |
| <b>1. Welcome</b>   | Mr Cook formally welcomed everyone to the meeting.   |  |               |                       |                      |
| <b>2. To receive/ratify the minutes from THF Board meeting held on 13.07.17 and 21.09.17</b>  | A slight amendment to Item 7 was agreed in that the final paragraph entitled 'Farewell' should be amended to read "Mr Cook, on behalf of the Board, said a few words of thanks".<br><br>Apart from this amendment the minutes dated 13.07.17 and 21.09.17 were accepted as a true record and ratified. | Item 7 of Minutes from THF Board meeting held on 13.07.17 to be amended.                       | Trish Roberts | Immediately           |                      |
| <b>3. To review Matters Arising not included on the agenda</b>  | Declaration of Interest forms – there are still a few forms outstanding. Trish to check returns and send out reminders.  | Chase up Trustee's Declaration of Interest forms that have still to be completed and returned. | Trish Roberts | ASAP                  |                      |
| <b>4. Notification of any Key Risks from any of the LGB's</b>   | Mr Pritchard reported that LHS has received a 'Note of Raising Concern' letter from their LA.  |  |               |                       |                      |

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| <p><b>5. Notification of any Key Risks from any of the Trust Committees</b></p> | <p>Mr Donnelly reported that Mr Barnes apologised for not being able to attend this meeting in person.</p> <p>The first meeting of the Education &amp; Standards Committee was held on 16.11.17, and following this Mr Barnes produced a Briefing Note for Trustees reporting on Key Risks and Strengths identified from this meeting. A copy of this document was shared with Trustees.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly provided a report update:</p> <p><b>Key Risks</b></p> <p>Point 2 – Underperformance in some key curriculum areas at both TPS and LHS (Science &amp; English respectively). Both of these schools are subject to Raising Achievement Plans (RAPs)</p> <p>Point 3 – Continued change to PFPS means that improvement is still in very early stages of development. Mr Holloway was appointed as Principal as of 01.01.17. A review has recently taken place and PFPS still remain in a very vulnerable position.</p> <p>Point 4 – Emerging weakness in Geography across the Trust. Geography issues are MAT-wide.</p> <p><b><i>Q: Would it be worth considering dropping Geography from the curriculum?</i></b></p> <p><b><i>A: Mr Donnelly has had conversations with the Principals and most schools want to continue delivering a broad and balanced curriculum for their students. Also, the Government have said that they want 75% of students to</i></b></p> |  |  |  |  |
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|  | <p><i>study EBAC* subjects. Taking all of this into account the consensus was that schools should offer a minimum of 8 GCSEs, it was considered that there is no added value in doing higher numbers of GCSEs. Next week's meeting with Principals will focus on EBAC subjects, particularly the offer of MFL.</i></p> <p><b>Q: Isn't there value in offering MFL subjects.</b><br/> <b>A: If students study one and pass it is good, but if they study one and fail there is a problem. Some schools have strong MFL departments and therefore value the credits that are achieved. The Trust would not want to lose MFL, but would not want to push students into subjects they didn't want to study.</b></p> <p>Mr Donnelly explained that schools needed to ensure that their advice is good enough to direct students to subjects that the school does well; and the Trust as a whole needed to focus on whether we can improve in time, so that we are not letting students down. He also explained that the curriculum offer would not be decided by the Trust, but by the school Principals as a group.</p> <p>Point 5 – Capacity to strengthen school improvement activities across the MAT. All schools have been involved in the bids for improvement funding.</p> <p><b>Key Strengths</b><br/> Point 3 – Primary headteacher partnerships and culture of collaborative improvement. The focus of the Primary Joint INSET Day was writing, on the back of this shared INSET sessions have taken place and further sessions are planned.</p> |  |  |  |  |
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|   | <p>The Primary sector have taken to the collaborative process in a really positive way. They are naturally building links with each other. The Secondary section are in an emergent stage in relation to this kind of collaborative working.</p> <p>Mr Pritchard also mentioned that he was pleased to see the developing links with Litherland Moss that have been made in relation to the Primary collaborative processes within the Trust.</p> <p><b>Report format and Information</b> - Mr Donnelly asked for any comments:</p> <p>Mr Cook stated that he felt the document was very useful in terms of clearly identifying the key risks and what is being done to mitigate them.</p> <p>Mr Pritchard suggested that it may be helpful if committee reports followed the same format as the CEO's report.</p> |  |  |  |  |
| <p><b>6. To receive:</b></p> <p><b>Notes from the Governance Conference held on 04.11.17</b></p> <p><b>Agreement of Actions going forward</b></p> | <p>Mr Donnelly reported on the action points from the Governance Conference held on 04.11.17:</p> <p>Point 1 – this item was covered within the CEO report</p> <p>Point 2 – Mr Donnelly and Mr Parkinson have met with Sarah Galbraith regarding Procurement.</p> <p>Point 3 – A couple of LGBs have requested to keep HR/ Finance function at LGB level. Mr Donnelly is more than happy for this to happen.</p>   |  |  |  |  |



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|                             | <p>Point 7 – First meeting date for CoG Forum is still to be decided. Mr Donnelly explained that there was a need for all schools to be represented. Ms Allen (CoG – HPS) notified the group that due to working nights, she may have problems with meeting dates. The group agreed that in the first instance, Mrs Roberts should liaise with Ms Allen (CoG – HPS) to ascertain her availability over the next couple of months, so that a list of possible dates could then be drawn up and sent out to CoG Forum members.</p>  |   |                       |                                   |  |
| <p><b>7. CEO Report</b></p> | <p>Mr Donnelly explained the new reporting format to the Trustees and asked that they provide comments/feedback as each section was discussed.</p> <p><b>Overall Trust Status</b><br/>Mr Donnelly reported that 6 schools have been identified as causing concern. Mr Cook suggested that the report should also notify Trustees of what mitigating actions are being put in place.</p> <p><b>Standards</b><br/>The 6 schools have been asked by Mr Donnelly to write initial action plans. First reviews have taken place and second reviews are due to take place w/c 11.12.17. Following these meetings action plans will be updated. Mr Donnelly and the SAILs will share/report on the action plans via the Education &amp; Standards committee.</p> <p><b>Finance</b><br/>Mr Donnelly and the finance team have had meetings with all schools to look at recalibrating budgets and most</p> | <p>Mitigating actions column to be added to future CEO reports.</p> | <p>David Donnelly</p> | <p>By next meeting (15.03.18)</p> |  |

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|  | <p>importantly reprofiling them; so that all costs are budgeted in line with monthly expenditure. On the back on this schools have been asked to identify any in-year savings that can be made. The completion deadline for this piece of work is the first week back in January.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly also reported that the audited accounts are due to be filed in January, and as a result he is expecting the ESFA to be in contact shortly afterwards. This means a proposed recovery plan will need to be produced in readiness for this conversation. The calculations clearly show that the Trust cannot recover within the year. One of the major problems is in relation to % of staffing across the Trust; it is currently in excess of 80% in most schools. Mr Donnelly and the finance team are looking to use the same benchmarking process as Outward Grange in order to reduce costs. Staffing restructures will need to take place and unfortunately it is impossible to rule out redundancies at this point in time. If the Trust can reach the 75% staffing costs level, the financial position will get better. Curriculum models are also being looked at; with any courses which are proven to be inefficient being removed. The Trust is also looking into any potential savings in relation to centralised joint procurement.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly explained that as the Trust makes efficiencies the report grading will change.</p> <p>Discussion followed regarding the required staffing percentages.</p> |  |  |  |  |
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|  | <p><b>Q: Is the 75% across the whole Trust or individual schools?</b><br/> <b>A: Average across the Trust, although Mr Donnelly is aware that it is difficult for small schools.</b></p> <p><b>Q: We have been told in the past that the top point for staffing is 80%?</b><br/> <b>A: 75% is sustainable, but once you reach 77% you are looking at going into deficit. We must aim for 75% as that is what the ESFA will want to see.</b></p> <p><b>Q: How does it match with pupil forecasting around here?</b><br/> <b>A: Mr Donnelly explained that there had been a culture of optimism over past years, and it was believed that things were going to get better. Unfortunately this has not happened. Mr Donnelly to look into this further, as calculations must be made on known figures.</b></p> <p>It was also mentioned that some schools staffing costs were a lot higher than others.</p> <p><b>Governance</b><br/> <b>Q: In terms of Governance, what other plans are being made?</b><br/> <b>A: The Board is currently struggling for numbers, quoracy has been a problem this year.</b></p> <p>Mr Cook reported that a recruitment process has begun. A number of applications have been received, and interviews will be taking place over the next couple of weeks.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly also reported that he viewed the LGB's as strong in terms of being actively involved within their schools, but feels that they have had a pragmatic view of</p> |  |  |  |  |
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|  | <p>where the Trust is in terms of performance and finance. When looking at these two areas it would be viewed that Governors have not had an impact. There is a need to focus on the question of whether we are holding our leaders to account. The standard of minutes is also variable across the Trust; there is plenty of evidence of LGB's questioning, but not necessarily challenging what they are being told. This is an issue as a Trust collectively. It is key that a meeting is arranged to discuss how LGBs work going forward; it may be worthwhile moving to more direct reporting with tighter agendas.</p> <p>Mr Pritchard reported that he has asked his clerk to add an additional column into LHS's Governing Body minutes so that it will evidence where actions have been followed through.</p> <p>Mrs Galbraith voiced surprise in that timed agendas were not being used, as in her past experience, it has been proven to be a powerful way of focussing agenda items.</p> <p><b><i>Q: LGBs need to have confidence in the Trust, but when the Trust Board structure is weak in terms of finance/governance, how much confidence can they have?</i></b><br/> <b><i>A: There is evidence to suggest that things have not been where they should have been, and it has not been helped with one of our Trustees being unable to attend meetings due to horrendous personal problems. This is one reason why the decision was made to advertise for additional Trustees via the DfE's Academy Ambassadors programme. They have come back with 3 nominations; 2 of which have been asked to attend for interview. We are hoping to</i></b></p> |  |  |  |  |
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|   | <p><i>recruit an additional 4 Trustees in total. This will strengthen the skill set of the Board considerably. Mr Cook also explained that LGB members were also able to apply if they so wished.</i></p> <p>Mr Cook thanked Mr Donnelly for his report.</p>   |  |  |  |  |
| <p><b>8. Proposal: Establishing an LGB for Palace Fields Primary School</b></p> | <p>Mr Donnelly explained that the proposal document is a new format and therefore any ideas/thoughts from the Trustees on the format and content would be gratefully received.</p> <p><b>Context:</b> Since PFPS joined the Trust an Interim MAT Board has been in place, it is now thought that it is the right time to move to a Local Governing Body.</p> <p><b>Q: Why is it a good time?</b><br/> <b>A: Some staff members of the Trust have been recently withdrawn from the committee, and the feeling is that rather than recruit more to the IMB, only for it to move to and LGB shortly afterwards, it was appropriate to look at moving to an LGB straight away.</b></p> <p>Mr Donnelly explained that there is a need to ensure the new Governing Body's skills sets match their delegated responsibilities and therefore the process to recruit governors is critical.</p> <p>Amendment: Point 18.1 to be changed to read "the Principal shall be held to account by the LGB".</p> |  |  |  |  |

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|  | <p>Following further discussion the Trustees approved the proposal, and agreed that it be taken to the PFPS IMB for agreement.</p> <p><b>RESOLUTION: Approval given for Palace Fields Primary School to move from an Interim MAT Board to a Local Governing Body</b></p>   | <p>Proposal for establishing an LGB for Palace Fields Primary School to be taken to Interim MAT Board for approval.</p> | <p>David Donnelly / Jane Ainsworth</p> | <p>Next PFPS IMB Meeting</p> |  |
| <p><b>9. AoB</b></p>                   | <p><b>Resignation</b><br/>Mr Cook reported that Mrs Galbraith has given him notice that she is planning to resign from the Board wef 31.12.17. Mrs Galbraith explained the reasons for her decision, and wished the Trust well its future endeavours. Mr Cook also thanked Mrs Galbraith for her support and contribution during her time with The Heath Family.</p> | <p>Companies House to be notified of resignation.</p>   | <p>Trish Roberts</p>                   | <p>01.01.18</p>              |  |
| <p><b>10. Date of next meeting</b></p> | <p>Education &amp; Standards: 7<sup>th</sup> February 2018<br/>Business &amp; Finance: 8<sup>th</sup> February 2018<br/>Full Board Meeting: 15<sup>th</sup> March 2018</p>   |   |  |                              |  |

Meeting closed at 10.30 am

These minutes are approved as a true record of the meeting

Signed: .....

**[Peter Cook]**

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> March 2018

Chair's initials to record approval of minutes: .....

Date: 15.03.18