

DULWICH HAMLET EDUCATIONAL TRUST (DHET)

Meeting of the BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Date: Thursday, 11 October 2018

Time: 18.30

Location: The Belham Primary School, 165 Bellenden Road, SE15 4DG

MINUTES

Present:	Crispin Tuckley	Chair	Chair
	Sonia Case	Executive Head Teacher	EHT
	Simon Latham	Trustee	SL
	Patricia Leahy	Trustee	PL
	Christopher Parsons	Trustee	CP
	Rebecca Tee	Trustee	RT
Clerk:	Kathleen Formosa		Clerk

1. Welcome & Apologies

- 1.1 The Chair opened the business of the meeting at 18.30, welcoming the members of the Board and others in attendance.
- 1.2 Apologies were **received** and **accepted** from Rafael Marks (RM) and Karen Robinson (KR).
- 1.3 A quorum was **confirmed** and the meeting proceeded to business accordingly.

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 RT declared as an interest that her daughter is currently on paid work experience at Belham Primary School (BPS). She stated that she would withdraw from related decisions regarding staffing at BPS or across the Trust.
- 2.1.1 There were no other interests declared.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

- 3.1 The minutes of the DHET meeting of 28 June 2018 (**Paper 1**) were **confirmed**

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

- 4.1 Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting (**Paper 2**) were **noted**.
- 4.2 Those matters not reported as actioned or otherwise to be addressed on the agenda were **discussed** as follows:
 - Item 8.2.1 – It was **noted** that the minutes of the local governing body meeting of the Dulwich Hamlet Junior School (DHJS) do not explicitly confirm acceptance of the budget.

Action: Chair to follow-up with KR.
 - Item 10.2 – RT reported that she has found that the paper to which she referred has been integrated into the governor visits policy which has been subsequently updated. It was agreed that the role of link governors may be an appropriate topic for the strategy session.
- 4.3 As a matter arising from the minutes, it was **discussed** and **agreed** that a reference should be included in the governance plan or scheme of delegation that it is for local governing bodies to determine (with reference to the relevant statutory guidance) the number and scope of link governorships for their school.

4.3.1 It was **discussed** that schools may consider putting frameworks in place to alert teachers and other staff when governor visits might take place and how governors are expected to deliver a “health check” of a particular subject area or school business area.

4.3.2 It was suggested that the governor visits policy should be updated accordingly, including any feedback from the local governing bodies. It was recommended that the policy is also cross referenced with the scheme of delegation.

ACTION: EHT to update the visits policy to clarify the process of governor visits and the relationship to the link role; and Chair to subsequently update the scheme of delegation.

4.4 As a matter arising from the minutes, a question was raised regarding the status of the ESFA agreement on the Belham Primary School (BPS) building, the long-term lease in particular.

4.4.1 EHT reported that no updates have been received. However, a meeting will be arranged with Southwark after the half term for the purpose of gaining clarity on arrangements for addressing defects with the building, including legal ownership.

ACTION: EHT to report back the outcome of the meeting with Southwark.

4.4.2 EHT reported that the building’s architect may be asked to join the meeting, if Southwark agree this is appropriate.

5. Chair’s Report

5.1 The Chair reported that EHT has reported her recommendations on teacher pay awards, and these have been **agreed**. He **confirmed** that questions around some individual pay awards have now been resolved.

5.2 The Chair reported that he, KR and RM attended the first of the three DfE MAT training sessions in early September.

5.2.1 The Chair reported that training materials have not yet been circulated by the DfE. These will be shared with Trustees as soon as they are received.

ACTION: Chair to circulate DfE training materials once these are received.

5.3 The letter from FASNA circulated to the Trustees by the Chair was **noted**.

5.3.1 The Chair reported that the Trust is a member of FASNA, now re-named the Confederation of School Trusts (CST).

6. Executive Head Teacher’s Report

6.1 The EHT’s report (**Paper 3**) was **taken as read**.

6.2 The very strong SATs results from DHJS were **noted**.

6.2.1 EHT reported that the school’s progress results are also a particular achievement. Ambitious targets have been set for the coming year as a result.

6.3 The Ofsted visit at BPS was **discussed**. EHT reported that a majority of staff are very happy with the Ofsted report and the outcome of the visit, although the rating of “Good” in some areas was disappointing to some.

6.3.1 It was **noted** that the Year 2 cohort in the school are the litmus test for BPS, as this is the original cohort of the school entering at Reception. It was commented that progress and achievement results for this year group are excellent, and it is therefore disappointing that the results for this year group, which were available, were not given greater weight.

6.3.2 It was **discussed** that although an overall rating of “Outstanding” was not achieved, this has not been an issue with parents. Consensus view of the Trustees was that the “Good” judgment gives the new Head of School something to work toward.

- 6.3.3 The Trustees expressed thanks to all at BPS for a job well done. SL was commended for his leadership of the LGB, noting that the school's governance was highlighted as a strength in the Ofsted report.
- 6.3.4 EHT stated that the school is now poised to dig deeper to develop its strengths now that Ofsted preparations are removed as a pressure. It is expected that the school will be re-inspected, however, in the next three to five years.
- 6.3.5 Questions were raised about DHJS and whether the school may be inspected as a result of the BPS inspection.
- 6.3.6 EHT stated that the Head of School at DHJS is looking ahead to a possible Ofsted visit. She reported that the inspection at BPS is viewed as an opportunity for greater collaboration and for sharing Ofsted readiness information between the schools.
- 6.3.7 EHT reported that the plan is for DHJS to be Ofsted ready in the near term.
- 6.4 SL shared his view on area where BPS could have been better prepared in advance of the Ofsted inspection:
- Clarity on the local governing body's responsibilities during the inspection;
 - The importance of the SEF (It was **noted** that this was the first thing the Ofsted inspector asked for, although there is no compulsory requirement to have a SEF);
 - Questions around the staff appraisal system and how judgments and metrics are determined;
 - The local governing body's understanding of teaching, learning, assessment and outcomes; and
 - The importance of sharing best practice across the schools.
- 6.4.1 EHT suggested that the issues SL has raised could be addressed as part of the strategy session. Various routes of enquiry for local governing bodies in regard to teaching and learning, and the assurances needed in these areas, were **discussed**.
ACTION: Chair and EHT to include the issues raised by SL on the agenda for the strategy session.
- 6.4.2 EHT suggested that a common agreed framework for the SEF, SIP, and similar documents that works across both schools should be developed to ensure ease of information sharing at management and governance levels.
- 6.5 The specific reference to an updated health and safety policy at BPS in the EHT's report was **noted**. It was questioned whether there was also an updated health and safety policy for DHJS.
- 6.5.1 The Chair stated that he was unsure how recently DHJS had updated its health and safety policy, but that he would raise the matter with the local governing body at its meeting on 17 October.
ACTION: Chair to query whether the DHJS health and safety policy has been updated and report back.

7. Trust Finance & Accounting

- 7.1 The minutes of the 1 October 2018 meeting of the Audit Committee (**Paper 4**) were **taken as read**.
- 7.2 CP reported in his capacity as Chair of the Audit Committee that the Trust is better prepared for the external audit than last year.
- 7.2.1 CP reported that following on from recent discussions among the Trustees, the Audit Committee has applied special scrutiny to building maintenance costs as these seemed well over budget. CP confirmed that Audit Committee's finding was that the budget set for these costs was unreasonably low, failing to account for contract costs.

- 7.2.2 CP reported that there is uncertainty around the employer's pension contributions for teachers and this has been noted. He stated that the matter would be included in the risk register and monitored.
- 7.2.3 It was **noted** that the Trust is tendering for a new payroll provider, which is a routine matter arising every three to five years.
- 7.2.4 CP reported that there have been preliminary discussions in the Audit Committee about top-slicing and the consolidation of bank accounts, but no conclusions have been reached as yet. He stated that the Audit Committee will continue to discuss the matter and should be expected to bring a recommendation to the Board once the issues become clear..
- 7.2.5 CP reported that Karen Smith will be leaving her post as the BPS business manager, which has opened an opportunity for re-organising the business management and finance team across the Trust. EHT has reported that good candidates have applied for the role, and some have been spoken to. No appointment has been made as yet.
- 7.3 The Audit Committee's work on the risk register was **discussed**.
- 7.3.1 It was reported that the risk registers are now owned by the schools and have been circulated to the executive teams for input, including the scoring of risks.
- 7.3.2 It was **agreed** that each school risk register should be reviewed by the school's LGB or business committee as a standing item on the agenda. Local governing bodies should then review the risk register at least once per year.
- 7.3.3 It was **agreed** that there should also be a Trust-wide risk register that is reviewed periodically by the Board.
- 7.3.4 CP stated that the Trust-wide risk register would be reviewed by the Audit Committee at its next meeting. By this time, the risk register should have been reviewed by the SLTs in each school and their input (e.g., scoring of risks) provided.
ACTION: EHT to ensure that school SLTs review and input to the risk register in advance of the next Audit Committee meeting.
- 7.3.5 Various approaches to developing the risk register and its role in the overall management of the schools (including identifying and addressing patterns of non-compliance with policies in place to mitigate risks) were **discussed** at length.
- 7.3.6 It was **noted** that the purpose of the risk register is to understand what measures are in place to mitigate risks and who is accountable.
- 7.3.7 It was suggested and **agreed** that risk assessment and risk management are included as routine items in Heads of School reports to local governing bodies.
ACTION: EHT to inform Heads of School that risk assessment and risk management should be routine items in their reports to local governors.
- 7.3.8 CP reported that he has been invited to the December meeting of the DHJS governing body to discuss the updated risk register and risk management. It was suggested and **agreed** that he would also be invited to attend the BPS governing body meeting for the same purpose next term.
ACTION: SL to arrange with CP a date to attend a BPS governing body meeting.
- 7.4 The draft Trustees' Report (**Paper 5**) was **reviewed**.
- 7.4.1 The Chair reported that the figures corresponding to the report are still being audited, but the narrative portion of the Trustees' Report which sits on top of the audited accounts is in draft.
- 7.4.2 Comments were invited on the draft, and it was **noted** that these should be sent to EHT. A final version of the Trustees' Report would be circulated in advance of the 6 December 2018 meeting.
ACTION: All Trustees to review the draft Trustees' Report, sending comments to EHT.

- 7.5 The 18 September 2018 letter from ESFA (**Paper 6**) was **reviewed** with reference to updates to the Academies Financial Handbook.
- 7.5.1 The Chair reported that the Board's scrutiny of the budget is not as frequent as ESFA now requires. It was **noted** that ESFA's instruction is that the Chair should review the EHT's financial reports on a monthly basis, and this was **discussed**.
- 7.5.2 It was **noted** that management accounts are currently produced on a bi-monthly basis and that Barry Walder reviews these with the business managers of each school. The cost implications of the production of additional management reports were **discussed**.
- 7.5.3 It was **noted** that the Accounting Officer – to whom ESFA's letter is addressed – is responsible for the prudent handling and application of public funds, but that EHT is not involved in the bi-monthly meetings between Barry Walder and the school business managers.
- 7.5.4 It was **agreed** that the Chair would discuss with Barry Walder what information could be given to EHT and the Chair on a monthly basis to satisfy the new requirement.
ACTION: Chair to consult Barry Walder on an approach to satisfying the new ESFA requirement.
- 7.5.5 Views were expressed that the Trust's current approach to budget monitoring was adequate and that there were appropriate checks and balances in place. Concern was expressed that in addition to incurring additional costs, the new requirements may also place an unnecessary burden on senior management.
- 7.5.6 It was **agreed** that the Trustees would consider an appropriate system of regular review of the Trust's finances following the appointment of a new finance lead.
- 7.6 The current budget position of each school (**Papers 7 and 7a**) was **reviewed**.
- 7.6.1 It was **noted** that the outturn for 2017/18 at each school was generally better than initially expected. The Chair reported that the Trust is entering the new financial year in a stable and healthy financial position.
- 7.7 It was **agreed** that although alternative funding sources had been placed on the agenda for the meeting, discussion of this matter would be brought back to a future meeting and include input from SLTs.

8. Governance & Trustee Matters

- 8.1 The strategy session arranged for 16 November 2018 was **discussed**.
- 8.1.1 The Chair reported that he and EHT were currently planning the agenda for the day. Confirmation of attendance has been received from Trustees, local governors and senior leaders. Topics to be included for discussion are:
- Role of the local governing bodies versus the Board;
 - Long-term vision of the Trust;
 - Succession planning; and
 - Practical work on effective teaching.
- 8.1.2 It was **noted** that other matters as discussed earlier in the meeting would also be included in discussions on the strategy day.
- 8.1.3 EHT clarified that the emphasis in the discussion of effective teaching would be on shared dialogue across the Trust and shared understanding of what this means. It was **acknowledged** that discussion would need to be kept at a strategic level.
- 8.1.4 It was **confirmed** that governors, Trustees, and school SLTs would be invited to participate in the strategy session. The total number of attendees is expected to be approximately 30. Most activities are expected to take place in small groups.
- 8.1.5 It was suggested and **agreed** that KR should be asked to facilitate the day.
ACTION: EHT to discuss with KR whether she would facilitate the strategy day.
- 8.1.6 Questions were raised about to what extent discussions should address questions about growth.

8.1.7 It was **discussed** that a focus of developing expertise within the schools can lead naturally to discussions about growth. It was **acknowledged** that growth is a Trustee concern rather than an issue for local governing bodies, but LGB engagement with issues around the Trust's future development will be important. It was **agreed** that the issue would be planned carefully ahead of a future strategy session.

8.2 The MAT Review Form (**Paper 8**) was **noted**.

8.2.1 The Chair reported that the same form was filled last year. He and EHT would again collaborate on completing the current form and circulate it to Trustees for comment.

ACTION: Chair and EHT to complete the MAT Review Form and circulate it to the Trustees for comment.

8.2.2 Initial thoughts on the scoring to be included in the form were briefly **discussed**. The Chair invited Trustees to share their views about scoring. It was agreed generally that scores in all areas should be in the range of 7 to 9.

8.3 Trustee and governor vacancies and recruitment were **discussed**.

8.3.1 The Chair reported that he has spoken to all Trustees who have confirmed their intentions for the coming year. He reported that PL would be stepping down as a Trustee at the end of her four-year term in February 2019, and RM at the end of his four-year term in September 2019.

8.3.2 The Chair stated that recruitment for new Trustees would begin in the new year. It was **agreed** that the range of skills remaining on the Board should be assessed in order to determine an appropriate profile for new Trustees.

8.3.3 Various approaches to recruitment were **discussed**, including whether it would be a benefit to recruit from the local governing bodies onto the Trust Board.

8.3.4 It was stated that if Trustees were recruited from the local governing bodies they would bring insight into monitoring school performance, the challenges of budgeting and staffing, and other issues specific to school governance. It was **noted**, however, that skills outside of education would be equally valuable.

8.3.5 It was **agreed** that in recruiting new Trustees, the Board would wish to ensure that due attention is paid to diversity, connections to the local area, and the time and willingness to commit to the unremunerated work that trustees are obliged to do.

8.3.6 SL reported that a vacancy for a community governor has been advertised for the BPS local governing body. He reported that BPS are using the website of *Inspiring Governance* for governor recruitment, and suggested that this may also be a resource for the Board. He stated his view that the quality of candidates found through the site had been very high.

8.3.7 Co-ordinated recruitment efforts for governors and Trustees were **discussed**. It was **noted** that in order to determine whether a candidate may be more appropriate for a local governing body versus the Trust Board, the respective bodies would need to be very clear about their search criteria and candidate profiles.

ACTION: Chair to draw up a recruitment strategy for consideration.

8.4 The MAT skills and self-evaluation action plan (**Paper 9**) was **noted**.

8.4.1 The Chair reported that most actions are substantially in progress. It was **agreed** that a more formal strategy document based on the action plan would be considered after 16 November 2018 strategy session.

8.5 The governor training and development SLA from Southwark (**Paper 10**) was **noted**.

- 8.5.1 The Chair reported that safeguarding training offered through Southwark was arranged last academic year. It was suggested that safeguarding training is arranged again this year, to ensure that all governors, and trustees, are up to date on their training. It was **noted** that governors are required to undertake safeguarding training every two years.
- 8.5.2 It was **discussed** that safer recruitment training would also be valuable to governors. It was **agreed** that arrangements for safer recruitment training would be considered.
- 8.5.3 It was **agreed** that local governing bodies would be consulted before DHET confirms to Southwark what training it would like to arrange this year.

8.6 It was **noted** that the governance documents (**Paper 11**) had been circulated ahead of the meeting and included four separate papers, as follows:

- Trustee responsibilities;
- DHET governance plan;
- DHET good governance code; and
- Scheme of delegation.

8.6.1 Changes to the documents since their last review by the Board were **noted**.

Trustees were invited to forward their comments and any suggestions for additional amendments to the Chair.

8.6.2 The Chair stated that the finalised governance documents would be circulated ahead of the 16 November 2018 strategy session.

ACTION: Chair to circulate the finalised governance documents to all Trustees ahead of the strategy session.

8.6.3 The Trustees thanked the Chair for his substantial redrafting of the governance documents and for his commitment to ensuring these were kept up to date.

9. Reports of the Local Governing Bodies

9.1 The minutes of the 16 July 2018 meeting of the DHJS local governing body (**Paper 12**) were **taken as read**.

9.2 The minutes of the 26 June 2018 meeting of the BPS local governing body (**Paper 13**) were **taken as read**.

9.2.1 SL reported that community cohesion has been a focus of the governing body following the parent workshop and that this is reflected in the minutes. He stated that the governing body would continue to monitor the issue and to discuss any relevant matters arising going forward.

9.2.2 SL gave his thanks to the Clerk for her minutes which were helpful during the school's Ofsted inspection, and which have helped the governing body to plan and track actions effectively.

9.3 It was **noted** that the minutes of the local governing bodies demonstrate that they are dealing with issues that are very different to those dealt with by the Trust Board.

9.3.1 It was **noted** that both local governing bodies show robust challenge to their school's leadership and to be delving into matters of strategic importance to the schools. The Chairs of the local governing bodies were commended for their good work.

10. Items for Review

10.1 It was **agreed** that the Trustees would consider the need for a formal Pay Committee at a future meeting.

ACTION: Clerk to keep constitution of a Pay Committee on the agenda.

10.2 The Teacher's Pay Policy (**Paper 14**) was **reviewed**.

- 10.2.1 EHT reported that the policy is updated every year. It was **noted** that changes to this year's policy include updates to teacher pay scales and clarifications around the assistant headteacher pay range.
- 10.2.2 It was **confirmed** that the policy now includes a statement about teachers at the M6 pay scale and how this will be dealt with by the schools.
- 10.3 The Teaching Staff Appraisal Policy (**Paper 15**) was **reviewed**.
- 10.4 The Support Staff Pay Policy (**Paper 16**) was **reviewed**.
- 10.4.1 It was **noted** that this is a new policy. EHT confirmed that support staff have been consulted on the policy.
- 10.5 The Support Staff Appraisal Policy (**Paper 17**) was **reviewed**.
- 10.5.1 It was **noted** that this is a new policy. EHT confirmed that support staff have been consulted on the policy.
- 10.6 All of the policies reviewed were **approved in principle**.
- 10.6.1 It was **agreed** that any drafting points on the policies should be sent to EHT.
ACTION: Trustees to send comments to the EHT. EHT to finalise the policy documents over the half term and arrange circulation and posting to the website as appropriate.
- 11. Safeguarding**
- 11.1 The Safeguarding Responsibilities of the Governing Body (**Paper 18**) were **reviewed**. It was **confirmed** that these had been updated to align with the new KCSIE guidance.
- 11.1.1 Key changes to the policy were **noted**.
- 11.1.2 The Chair stated that the Chairs of the local governing bodies should confirm that all local governors have received and read the policy. Trustees should also be familiar with the updated guidance.
ACTION: LGB Chairs to confirm that local governors have received and read the new DfE guidance.
- 11.2 The Safeguarding Checklist (**Paper 19**) was **noted**.
- 12. Any Other Business**
- 12.1 The Clerk suggested that use of DropBox or SharePoint may be a more efficient and secure way of sharing papers ahead of meetings than emailed zip files.
- 12.1.1 It was **agreed** that the matter should be explored.
ACTION: Clerk to review available options and report back.

The business of the meeting concluded at 21:00.

Dates of the Next Meetings

- A strategy session with LGBs and senior leaders will be held on **Friday, 16 November 2018** at 16:00 at BPS.
- The next meeting of the Trustees will be **Thursday, 6 December 2018** at 18:30 at DHJS.

KF/kf: 20/10/2018