



Nexus MAT Board of Directors Meeting Wednesday 20 December 2023 5.15 pm – 7.30 pm at Nexus HQ

Attendees:		
Andrew Child MBE	Director/Member & Chair of Trust Board of Directors	Chair
Rachel Potts	Director/Member & Vice Chair of Trust Board of Directors	RP
Gillian Askew	Director (via Teams)	GA
Steve Booth	Director	SB
Colin Bradley	Director	CB
Mark Greenwood	Director (via Teams)	MG
Tina Havenhand	Director	TH
Ray Palmer	Director	RPa
Sue Shelley	Director	SS
Also Present:		
Warren Carratt	Chief Executive Officer	CEO
Joel Hardwick	Assistant CEO – Corporate Affairs	JH
Victoria Morris	Adviser	VM
Renata Robins	Governance Clerk	Clerk
Karen Smith	Chief Finance Officer	KS
Apologies:		
Rosey Andrassy	Adviser	RA
Peter Castleton	Director	PC
Naveen Judah	Director	MG
Jacky Tattershall	Assistant CEO – QA& Improvement	JT

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	ACTIONS
<p>1.1 Welcome & receive apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies were received for RA, NJ, JT and PC.</p>	
<p>1.2 To accept apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies were accepted for RA, NJ, JT and PC.</p>	
2. ITEMS FOR AOB	
<p>Chair to determine any items of urgent business to be considered</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Name shortlist for schools. Item noted in 12. 	
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS	
<p>3.1. Individual Directors to declare any personal, business/governance interests on any item on the agenda</p> <p>CEO declared that he, SB, KS and JH had an interest in Item 9 on the agenda and would therefore leave the meeting for this item.</p>	
4. NEXUS MAT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MINUTES	
<p>4.1 To approve the minutes of the following meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trust Board Meeting held on Wednesday 22 November 2023 <p>The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.</p>	
<p>4.2 To approve the minutes of the following meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Extraordinary Trust Board Meeting held on 13 December 2023 <p>The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.</p>	
<p>4.3 Review of Action Tracker</p> <p>Action Tracker was reviewed and updated as appropriate.</p> <p>6.0/4.1.2 CEO confirmed he had made a diary note for July to produce a short narrative in the annual report linking it to the accounts around governance.</p>	
<p>4.3 Matters arising from the Minutes</p> <p>SB commented, referring to the EOM minutes, that he was pleased to see that the three items that he raised had been corrected on the final draft of the accounts.</p> <p>No other matters were raised.</p>	
5. ANNUAL ACCOUNTS – TO TAKE A DECISION	
<p>KS reported that the amended accounts and management letter had been circulated to the Directors via Governor Hub. The Auditors had now confirmed all changes had</p>	

<p>been made to the accounts which had been requested when reviewed at the Extraordinary Board Meeting on 13 December 2023.</p> <p>No further questions were raised on these accounts and Directors unanimously agreed to adopt these accounts. KS to confirm with the auditors that these accounts have now been accepted.</p>	<p>Action: KS 21/12/2023</p>
<p>6. STRATEGIC ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE REPORT – TO RECEIVE AND SCRUTINISE</p>	
<p>CEO provided a brief overview and asked for any questions.</p> <p>SS enquired if Nexus had a system in place to gather compliments from stakeholders? The context to her question was parents expressing enthusiasm about their child’s experience at the Christmas ‘Winter Wonderland’ event being held at Nexus via social media. The CEO responded that there was no formal mechanism for collecting compliments corporately, but highlighted that the number of complaints against Nexus schools was notably low, indicating overall satisfaction, and the Academy Council Headteacher Reports cover parental involvement and voice, as well as having parent governors in their membership.</p> <p>SS sought confirmation that Nexus would be informed of the free schools they have bid for by the end of the autumn term, as noted in page3? The CEO affirmed that this was accurate in terms of what DfE officers have told him, and the deadline for this information should therefore be Friday 22 December 2023. It remains unclear if that deadline will be honoured.</p> <p>RP enquired about schools that participated in "mocksted" phone calls and visits, referencing page 1? The CEO listed North Ridge, Coppice, Kelford, Pennine View, Abbey, and Hilltop as schools that took part, with more detailed reports due to be submitted to the Standards Committee. The Headteacher at Craggs declined the invitation for a "mocksted".</p> <p>RP questioned the low attendance of Nexus headteachers at the initial meeting of the new Heads/Heads of School Action Learning Sets on page 2? The CEO clarified that attendance was optional and is only for new Heads, citing the busy nature of the Autumn term as a reason for only 50% of headteachers being present.</p> <p>RP asked for additional feedback on the meeting with the Department for Education (DfE) Regional Director for Yorkshire & Humber, as discussed on pages 6 and 7? The CEO reported a positive meeting focused on performance evaluation and capacity testing against DfE expectations. The Chair emphasized the Trust's high value in the eyes of the Department, and despite the absence of mainstream performance data, the meeting explored various aspects, including governance, capacity, schools, and improvement, in a non-confrontational manner.</p> <p>RP enquired if the CEO and Chair felt the Department were supportive of the Nexus growth model? The CEO indicated that there was no indication otherwise, and they were not surprised or voiced any concerns about the Nexus model being ready to realise expansion to 24 schools.</p>	

<p>SS, referring to page 5, brought up concerns about the Kilnhurst Canalside site in talks with Rotherham Council, specifically about potential flooding risks and associated costs. JH responded that ongoing discussions are underway with the council. It was emphasized that this was an open conversation, and there was a need to remain aware of potential risks.</p>	
<p>7. EXTERNAL AUDITOR APPOINTMENT – TO TAKE A DECISION</p>	
<p>KS presented this item, noting that the Audit & Risk Committee, during its meeting on 13 November 2023, put forth a recommendation for the Board of Directors to extend the Forrester-Boyd contract by an additional 2 years.</p> <p>CB asked if the current contract reflects value for money, and the CEO stated that – during the last procurement exercise – Forrester Boyd scored full marks for value for money and were the lowest cost bidder by some distance. Unit costs have remained the same.</p> <p>After an in-depth discussion among Board members regarding a number of elements, including the cost-effectiveness of the extension, the Board unanimously voted in favour of extending the Forrester-Boyd contract by an additional 2 years.</p>	
<p>8. APPENDIX A - DASHBOARD</p>	
<p>The CEO introduced the School Performance Dashboard, highlighting the importance of reviewing Item 8.1's summary report alongside it.</p>	
<p>8.1 Academies Dashboard Summary Report – To receive and scrutinise</p> <p>SS enquired about Becton's attendance figures and whether excluding Chapel House would improve the attendance records? The CEO acknowledged the complexity, highlighting that children were currently taught if they were well enough. Starting September 2024, new Attendance Codes guidance from the DfE will introduce new codes under Code C 'Absence'—specifically, C1, C2, and C3 to account for reasons such as anxiety, etc. This will help provide more contextual data for Chapel House. The CEO has also discussed this issue recently with the Executive Headteacher for the school.</p> <p>SB questioned the downgrading of Becton's staff sickness absence? The CEO assured the Board that this was not considered an issue requiring any further mitigation. Becton has experienced staff who have been at the school for a long time and retention remains strong. This dip reflects seasonal illness.</p> <p>RP enquired about Heatherwood's anticipated OFSTED inspection date? The CEO clarified that the school was currently within the OFSTED inspection window and was optimistic about receiving at least a 'Good' rating.</p>	
<p>8.2 Academies Intervention Report – To receive and scrutinise</p> <p>The CEO provided an overview of the report.</p>	

<p>SS inquired about Craggs' reduced Pupil Premium (PP) rating in light of the discussion in 3.1, seeking further clarification on the evidence? The CEO noted that the most recent data reflects a widening gap for disadvantaged pupils compared to non-Pupil Premium peers. The Quality Assurance and Improvement team are looking at support around this amongst a number of other elements in Craggs' performance.</p> <p>SB enquired about the intervention model and when it was approved by Directors? The CEO clarified that the model had been in place since 2017. All policies were published on the Nexus website.</p> <p>Directors felt that the intervention was a really strong model and felt reassured in the Trust's capabilities.</p> <p>SS enquired about the situation at Craggs and what happens to those children in 2 to 3 years' time without the early intervention planned? The CEO described the overall situation around KS2 performance and moving into secondary schools, and gave an overview of the work being done to provide a more forensic analysis at individual pupil level to support each child to reach their potential in a sustainable way.</p>	
<p>9. CEO & CFO APPRAISAL OUTCOMES – TO RECEIVE AND SCRUTINISE</p>	
<p>Both items were minuted separately as confidential appendices.</p>	
<p>10. BUDGET MONITORING - TO RECEIVE AND SCRUTINISE</p>	
<p>KS introduced this item and explained about the new format being a work in progress and now includes pupil numbers for each school.</p> <p>SS asked if there could be some uniformity, such as surplus/deficit shown in red. KS stated that they were working within system constraints but will ensure this is corrected manually for future reports.</p> <p>TH asked if Pennine View had sickness absence insurance? CEO responded that he was sure Pennine View had but the majority of schools did not have this as they did not feel they would benefit from it.</p> <p>SB stated that early in the year Nexus have positive budgets and something happens and we have schools out by £150k. Is this something that we would expect to see every year? CEO responded that they see this every year as £150k can be accounted for by changes to a small number of placements, but the new system should mean there are fewer surprises.</p> <p>SB stated that the new format was very easy to understand and prompts Directors to ask questions.</p>	
<p>11. POLICY REVIEW REPORT – TO TAKE A DECISION</p>	
<p>The Lettings Policy had been updated to reflect the need for hirers to take out their own insurance and all references to COVID-19 measures had been removed.</p>	

<p>Report was unanimously approved by the Board.</p>	
<p>11.1 Trust Curriculum Policy – To take a decision</p> <p>The CEO clarified that Nexus doesn't mandate specific curriculum expectations for our schools. Nonetheless, it was emphasized that having a broad Curriculum Policy was essential to align with national expectations. If approved JH would ensure that it was uploaded to the website.</p> <p>Report was unanimously approved by the Board.</p>	<p>Action: JH 22/12/2023</p>
<p>12. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS</p>	
<p>JH sought the Board's approval for shortlisted names for consideration by the involved schools so that they can choose a name:</p> <p>Renaming of Holgate Meadows (at the point of academisation). Shortlisted names:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Voyager Academy; ▪ Green City Academy; ▪ Hallamshire Academy; ▪ Lotus Academy. <p>The hub that we are looking to develop at McAuley High School (Pennine View). Shortlisted names:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pennine Hub; • The Helix; • The Nest. <p>Directors gave their unanimous consent for the shortlisted names to be put forward for local decision making.</p>	
<p>13. REVIEW OF RISK</p>	
<p>13.1 To consider any new risks identified during the meeting for referral to Trust Committees</p> <p>None.</p>	
<p>14. CONFIDENTIALITY</p>	
<p>14.1 To consider the confidentiality of any items discussed during the meeting</p> <p>Item 9 minuted separately as Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.</p>	
<p>15. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS</p>	

<p>Members AGM Monday 15th January 2024</p>	<p>17:30 – 19:00</p>	<p>Nexus HQ/Teams</p>
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Wednesday 31 st January 2024	17:00 – 19:30	Teams
Wednesday 28 th February 2024	17:00 – 19:30	Nexus HQ
Wednesday 27 th Marcy 2024	17:00 – 19:30	Teams
Wednesday 24 th April 2024	17:00 – 19:30	Nexus HQ
Wednesday 22 nd May 2024	17:00 – 19:30	Teams
Wednesday 26 th June 2024	17:00 – 19:30	Nexus HQ
Wednesday 17 th July 2024	17:00 – 19:30	Teams

Minutes approved.

CHAIR	SIGNATURE	DATE