



Nexus MAT Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday 27 March 2024
5.00 pm – 7.30 pm via MS Teams

| Present: | Role: | Initials: |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| 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 | GA |
| Steve Booth | Director | SB |
| Colin Bradley | Director | CB |
| Peter Castleton | Director | PC |
| Mark Greenwood | Director | MG |
| Tina Havenhand | Director | TH |
| Naveen Judah | Director | NJ |
| Ray Palmer | Director (joined at 5.45pm) | RPa |
| Sue Shelley | Director | SS |
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| Also Present: | | |
| Rosey Andrassy | Advisor | RA |
| Warren Carratt | Chief Executive Officer | CEO |
| Naomi Cooper | Advisor | NC |
| Joel Hardwick | Assistant CEO – Corporate Affairs | JH |
| Victoria Morris | Advisor | VM |
| Renata Robins | Governance Clerk | Clerk |
| Jacky Tattershall | Assistant CEO – QA & Improvement | JT |
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| Apologies: | | |
| Phil Bradley | Advisor | PB |
| Karen Smith | Chief Finance Officer | KS |
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| No apologies: | | |
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| 1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE | ACTIONS |
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| <p>1.1 Welcome & receive apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies were received for PB and KS.</p> | |
| <p>1.2 To accept apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies were accepted for PB and KS.</p> | |
| 2. ITEMS FOR AOB | |
| <p>Chair to determine any items of urgent business to be considered</p> <p>Item 12.1 – Audit and Risk/Finance and Infrastructure meeting dates.</p> <p>Item 12.2 – Procurement update.</p> | |
| 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, JH and JT had an interest in Item 10 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 28 February 2024. <p>The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.</p> | |
| <p>4.2 Review of Action Tracker</p> <p>Action Tracker was reviewed and updated as appropriate.</p> <p>9.0 Re-appointment of Directors for a further term of office (GA, NJ and SS) - GIAS updates and DBS renewals.</p> <p>JH reported this item was underway but incomplete and will be brought forward to the next meeting.</p> | <p>Action: JH 24/04/2024</p> |
| <p>4.3 Matters arising from the Minutes</p> <p>None raised.</p> | |
| 5. ENTERPRISE WORKS LEASE – FOR DIRECTORS TO TAKE A DECISION | |
| <p>This item was minuted confidentially, separately as Appendix 3.</p> | |

| 6. EMPLOYEE OPINION SURVEY 2024 – SUMMARY OVERVIEW PRESENTATION | |
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| <p>Presentation previously circulated and CEO briefed the meeting with the headline Trust-wide information, as more detailed information briefs the Standards Committee. This was a biennial staff survey and the last one was held in 2022. It was encouraging to note that the 68% response rate was a marked improvement on the last survey, where there was a 43% response across the 10 schools. So, overall, the CEO felt that the response painted a positive picture.</p> <p>SB – asked, as regards the Central Trust survey of a 79% response rate, it then states 100%. Was that 100% of the 79%? CEO confirmed that was correct.</p> <p>RP – results were outstanding but were they too good and what next? RP would be interested to know how the granular detail is communicated and received by individual schools via headteachers, just as a reinforcement of how everyone feels? CEO underscored the pivotal role of HR in the dissemination of information. The headline information was shared at the Staff Parliament where there was a good cross-section representation by all schools, bar one. Hopefully this was the reinforcement that Directors were seeking. JT further underlined that the feedback from the Staff Parliament was really positive. The only feedback was around employee benefits but there were suggestions and ideas from the Staff Parliament on how to improve and widen that offer.</p> <p>GA – asked that although she knew that there was no national benchmark, did CEO know how Nexus Trust surveys had compared to other trusts of a similar nature? CEO expressed scepticism about the likelihood of another trust being willing to share such information. However, he noted the possibility of exploring this with other trusts collaborating with Nexus. This avenue could potentially facilitate a broad benchmarking initiative among peers.</p> <p>GA – asked if the Trust was planning to publish and talk more openly about the positives from the survey? CEO mentioned that this information was disseminated to internal stakeholders via the Annual Workforce Engagement Statement. Meanwhile, the HR team, led by MS, was actively developing a Trust-centric recruitment strategy, aimed at establishing a corporate brand that complements rather than overshadows the unique character and ethos of individual schools. Integrating this achievement into such initiatives would be a seamless fit, and the CEO committed to discussing this further with the HR team.</p> <p>Action: CEO to discuss with MS in HR possibility of including survey highlights in new recruitment model.</p> <p>GA - enquired about the 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' statements (particularly with the 19% in performance management), seeking reassurance that the CEO was actively pursuing next steps to delve deeper and identify the underlying reasons behind the less positive responses?</p> | <p style="text-align: right;">Action: CEO/HR 24/4/2024</p> |

CEO mentioned that he would be meeting with HR to look through the breakdowns per school. CEO undertook to take to the Standards Committee an action plan to help improve some of the areas where the feedback was not as positive as it could be.

SS – enquired if the Members, Trustees, Governors and Directors survey would be part of what the Governance Manager had been asking them to do about the skills audit for what the development programme needs to be?

CEO said no, not intended for the Governance Manager to be picking this up. These were the ones that were shaped by the researcher at UCL where Nexus promised anonymity.

PC – echoed RP’s sentiments about the positive outcomes in the survey and asked, in relation to performance management, whether the questionnaire was framed and structured in a way in terms of content to enable the Trust to establish trend data?

CEO stated that it would come with some limitations as the Trust grows but the CEO undertook to provide trend analysis to the Standards Committee.

The Chair summarised that Nexus was ‘a company of choice’ and thanked the CEO and his staff for the positive outcome.

7. ENTERPRISE LEARNING INSTITUTE – OVERVIEW PRESENTATION

Report previously circulated and JT provided an overview for the Directors of developing the work through the Enterprise Learning Institute which was renamed from the Nexus Learning Institute, to separate the branding. JT invited questions.

SB – thanked JT and asked if Nexus had looked into accreditation with Investors in People as he felt that this would be useful to get this recognition across the MAT? SB also thought that Nexus met the criteria for the accreditation.

JT has not explored yet, but something open to consideration.

SS - intrigued about the branding used, especially the building name as the marketing brand and was interested behind the thinking in doing that? SS felt that the Nexus brand was very special and should not be under estimated.

CEO stated it was a helpful connection with the building. The rationale behind this was to establish a distinct corporate brand, separate from the Nexus brand, aimed at effectively engaging external stakeholders. This was particularly important given the lingering wariness among many schools towards multi-academy trusts, stemming from historical concerns, and was about trying to remove a barrier to engagement.

RPa – regarding internal CPD, was there an intention to make it mandatory for staff to attend so many training sessions, or was it measured by number of points? Secondly, would this be linked in with the appraisal process for staff?

JT said there was a mandatory induction for all staff as part of the CPD package, with additional school-specific training determined by headteachers. Schools' training needs were prioritised through the Train the Trainer programmes and a Trust subscription to the National College, aligned with appraisal and performance management, leaving resource utilisation decisions for headteachers.

RP – stated that she found this really exciting and there were opportunities for growth. RP would be really interested in a follow up on progress in 6 months to one year's time. Would the CEO's update on the strategic objectives provide an update on this project moving forward?

CEO said yes, through the Standards Committee with a high-level update. The aim is to have a prospectus and offer which the CEO could then report against over time.

PC – the training courses listed were very practical in nature, where is the thinking in relation to the improvement of teaching quality as part of that CPD offer?

JT stated that work was underway on various projects such as accredited pathways and initial teacher training; developing Teaching Toolkits for both teachers and support staff with the aim to have them ready for Train the Trainer sessions in the autumn and the rolling out of subject-specific training to boost educators' subject knowledge. As the work is consolidated in this area, all these efforts will be part of the prospectus.

PC – seeking reassurance that the driver is the Trust's recognition of the need for improvement and standards through CPD, rather than simply an income generating scheme?

JT stated that Nexus has consistently offered quality specialist support and leaders are determined to elevate services further. While we've relied on Nexus schools' goodwill in the past, our growth demands better planning for staff releases to ensure smooth operations without burdening any one institution.

VM – asked if there was any scope for the Trust to have a bank of staff to cover if staff needed to be released?

CEO said that the intention would be to ensure proactive planning and programming, anticipating and preparing for future needs. This entails expecting and planning for these requirements by headteachers, and if necessary, tapping into the supply bank as a resource.

Chair– asked how success would be measured and when?

JT said that when there is something that can be rolled out - would be when the infrastructure is in place; and whether the courses are successful -will would be through the feedback from the courses offered.

Chair - timeline for this initiative?

JT stated there is a project outline but it needs a project plan.

Chair – can the Board be updated when the plan is in place?

JT said yes.

Chair thanked JT for the excellent presentation.

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| <p>8. CRAGS COMMUNITY SCHOOL – OFSTED OUTCOME REFLECTIONS PRESENTATION</p> | |
| <p>Presentation previously circulated and CEO invited questions.</p> <p>RP – asked what the reaction from pupils, staff, parents and community was, if anything? CEO stated that the community was not aware yet. The staff were made aware by the CEO the next day. Headteacher thought the judgement was a fair reflection overall.</p> <p>CB – what plans around stakeholder comms and how is that message going to be communicated to the stakeholders? CEO felt the key stakeholders were the parents and carers. Nexus was working with the headteacher to provide a balanced message in the letter which will accompany the Ofsted report when it is published.</p> <p>SS – did the senior leadership at the school see the judgement as a fair reflection of the inspection? CEO said the senior leadership team and leadership & management was graded as good. The real test will be the SATs outcomes this year. The Headteacher recognised that the school needed to improve writing and they were working hard to do that.</p> <p>Chair – requested a follow up update at the July meeting? CEO advised that an update would come through in the over-arching Dashboard Report for the July meeting.</p> | |
| <p>9. POLICY UPDATE REPORT – FOR DIRECTORS TO TAKE A DECISION</p> | |
| <p>The CEO explained that the policies in the report had minor alterations, as per the covering report, whilst the Academy of Concern and Sponsored Academy Intervention Policy had been extensively rewritten and therefore the policy had been submitted to the Board in full.</p> <p>PC - in relation to "Raising malicious or vexatious grievances about other staff', was there an appeal process to that? CEO said yes, as this was included as it was recognised that there was a gap so that Nexus would have a process if the person who submitted the grievance did so maliciously, and it would be dealt with through the Disciplinary Policy.</p> <p>9.1 Academy of Concern and Sponsored Academy Intervention Policy The CEO took Directors through the revisions to the policy as this was a marked change on how Headteachers would feel accountable to the Trust, particularly in regards to pending inspections. Headteachers would be briefed on this by their line managers.</p> <p>Chair– asked if it was worth considering reviewing the policy every year as opposed to biennial? CEO stated that any change in practice was reviewed as and when necessary.</p> <p>The new policy updates were all formally approved.</p> | |

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| <p>Action: JH to issue a policy briefing to inform the workforce on the updates.</p> | <p>Action: JH 28/03/2024</p> |
| <p>10. CEO/CFO MID-YEAR REVIEWS FEEDBACK – FOR DIRECTORS TO RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION</p> | |
| <p>The CEO, SB, JH, JT left the meeting for this item (as appropriate) which was minuted confidentially as separate Appendices 1 and 2.</p> | |
| <p>11. SCHOOL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SELF-ASSESSMENT RETURN - FOR DIRECTORS TO RECEIVE FOR REFERENCE</p> | |
| <p>As per the declaration on the self-assessment return, Directors received the report for reference for review as directed by the DfE.</p> | |
| <p>12. ANY URGENT BUSINESS</p> | |
| <p>12.1 Audit and Risk / Finance and Infrastructure meeting dates – suggested amendment to the dates – For Directors to take a decision</p> | |
| <p>The CEO introduced this item. The CFO had looked at the meeting schedule for next year to ensure that the relevant financial reports go to the above committees before they go to the full TBoD. For this summer, however, to ensure that the budget comes to the TBoD meeting on 17 July, it was unanimously agreed to move the Finance and Infrastructure meeting from 13 May to 8 July 2024, and move the Audit and Risk meeting from 8 July to 1 July when SS will be presenting her Annual Statement of Assurance and Activity to the committee.</p> | |
| <p>The suggested amendment to the dates was formally approved.</p> | |
| <p>Action: Clerking Services to make the necessary calendar amendments and email notifications to committee members.</p> | |
| <p>12.2 Procurement Update JH shared some exciting news with the Directors: Nexus had achieved the prestigious Chartered Institute of Procurement Supplies Procurement Excellence Award, along with its accompanying accreditation. This award, typically reserved for much larger organisations, marked a significant achievement for Nexus, being only the second MAT nationally to receive it. JH expressed gratitude to GA for the introduction, and offered special thanks to Lana Stoyles, who played a key role in the assessments. An Awards Ceremony is scheduled for 8 May at Enterprise Works and JH extended an invitation to the Directors to attend for lunch and a photo opportunity.</p> | |
| <p>Action: Clerking Services to email invitation to Directors the Awards Ceremony on 8 May.</p> | |
| <p>GA commended Lana Stoyles for her exemplary leadership in the assessments. The accreditation of this award prominently declares Nexus as 'a safe pair of hands', a</p> | |

**Action:
Clerking
Services
28/03/24**

**Action:
JH/Clerking
Services
15/04/24**

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| <p>recognition that is not easily attained. This accreditation stands as a significant achievement for the Trust, indicating its commitment to excellence. GA expressed great satisfaction and pride in this accomplishment.</p> <p>Chair – asked if there would be a press release with photographs, would it go on the Nexus website and if the DfE and ESFA would be informed? The DfE were keen to attend the Awards Ceremony themselves and were very keen on the press that would surround this.</p> | |
| 13. REVIEW OF RISK | |
| <p>13.1 To consider any new risks identified during the meeting for referral to Trust Committees</p> <p>None.</p> | |
| 14. CONFIDENTIALITY | |
| <p>14.1 To consider the confidentiality of any items discussed during the meeting</p> <p>Items minuted confidentially as appropriate.</p> | |
| 15. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS | |

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| Wednesday 24 April 2024 | 17:00 – 19:30 | Nexus HQ |
| Wednesday 22 May 2024 | 17:00 – 19:30 | Teams |
| Wednesday 26 June 2024 | 17:00 – 19:30 | Nexus HQ |
| Wednesday 17 July 2024 | 17:00 – 19:30 | Teams |

Minutes approved.

| CHAIR | SIGNATURE | DATE |
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