



## Nexus MAT Board of Directors Meeting Wednesday 2 March 2022 5 - 7.30 pm at Nexus HQ

<b>Attendees:</b>		
Andrew Child	Director/Member & Chair of Trust Board of Directors	Chair
Steve Booth	Director	SB
Peter Castleton	Director	PC
Naveen Judah	Director	NJ
Rachel Potts	Director/Vice Chair of Trust Board of Directors	RP
Sue Shelley	Director	SS
Gillian Askew	Director	GA
<b>Also Present:</b>		
Warren Carratt	Chief Executive Officer	CEO
Joel Hardwick	Assistant CEO – Strategy & Partnerships	JH
Jacky Tattershall	Assistant CEO – School Improvement	JT
Cath Sands	CFO	CS
Barry-John Simmons	MAT Clerk	BJS
<b>Apologies:</b>		
Ray Palmer	Director	RPa

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	ACTIONS
<p>1.1 Welcome &amp; receive apologies for absence</p> <p>The Chair passed on RPa apologies.</p> <p>The Chair made some brief remarks in tribute and then led a one-minute silence to pay respects to John Coleman, who unexpectedly passed away last week. This was observed by all.</p> <p>PC Joined meeting at 17:07</p>	
<p>1.2 To accept apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies were accepted for RPa.</p>	
2. ITEMS OF AOB	
<p>Chair to determine any items of urgent business to be considered</p> <p>The CEO asked for the following items to be raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Update on Judicial Review</li> <li>▪ Staff Pay Award</li> </ul> <p>The Chair also added:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Chair of Standards committee</li> </ul>	
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
<p>3.1. Individual Directors to declare any personal, business/governance interests on any item on the agenda</p> <p>None.</p>	
4. TRUST BOARD OF DIRECTORS MINUTES	
<p>4.1. To approve the minutes of the following meeting:</p> <p>The minutes of the meetings held on 26 January 2022 were reviewed and agreed.</p>	
<p>4.2. Review of Action Tracker</p> <p>The outstanding actions on the tracker were reviewed and updated. All actions were reported as complete.</p>	
<p>4.3. Matters arising from the Minutes</p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>	
5. 2021-22 STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE	
<p>CEO discussed the range of changes, successes and overall positivity that the strategic business plan has led to, including prospective partnerships and opportunities for links with Nottinghamshire County Council.</p>	

Chair asked which success gives the most sense of pride. CEO responded that the shared ethical standards across MAT continued to be the main highlight.

RP asked about the site visit in Barnsley - JH then gave an overview and building update and what it required and associated costs. RP also asked what the timescale was regards another possible sponsored school and the CEO confirmed he anticipates there would be more information on this after the March RSC Advisory Board meeting.

GA wanted more insight into the Inset day "Through Eyes of a Child". JT explained how it worked and that she is awaiting official feedback forms.

Chair asked about the eco schools agenda, the recent assessment of the Kenwood & Moncrieffe sites, and whether this work was being undertaken across the MAT estate? JH explained it is being actioned across the MAT estate and updated the Chair that they are still working with Sheffield council regards the buildings and has a meeting in a few weeks to gain further updates.

RP questioned the investigations mentioned at Craggs & Kelford? CEO confirmed both instances require an independent investigator, and the CEO has briefed PC on the Kelford detail.

Chair complimented the CEO, JT & JH on their work on the plan.

## **6. ACADEMIES DASHBOARD REPORT**

CEO mentioned some corrections on the report to the board, which he has made and shared in an updated report on Governor Hub, and then gave an overview of the report as a whole.

The CEO highlighted the fact there were obvious interruptions across schools and that Coppice has seen the broadest decline in indicators, but this was explained in the report. With Coppice, JT/CEO are working closely with school leaders and added that the Phonics consultant that has been employed will ensure there is the support and capacity to support improvement.

The CEO welcomed how Bader and Pennine View have evidenced their moving forward and assurances were found with the B11 reporting. CEO also discussed how with Pennine View & North Ridge it would not be unhelpful to be inspected soon. CEO having 1:1s with Heads and will discuss the idea of requesting an inspection with them.

SB asked if we have asked OFSTED for an inspection before, and the CEO said no. SB asked about what the colours represented on the Appendix B report? The CFO confirmed these were just to liven up the visual.

RP asked whether staff sickness was improving? CEO said that it seems to be back on track after the January wave of COVID cases and that schools were still stretched but it was manageable, though deficits were still noticeable due to excess supply costs.

PC questioned whether OFSTED take COVID in to account? CEO replied that they did not.

<p><b>7. MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL-LEVEL HISTORICAL AND IN-YEAR SURPLUSES</b></p>	
<p>CEO outlined the issue of surpluses and the problems associated with it. The report has been to Audit &amp; Risk Committee and the recommendations were endorsed there, .</p> <p>SB agreed this was a good plan of action but wanted to check if this was using historic surpluses? CEO said the schools would be left with 150K from historical and in year.</p> <p>NJ asked if there was a balance sheet for schools? CS replied that they could be brought up for all schools.</p> <p>PC asked for reassurance that the Trust could not be accused of colluding not to spend money for school? CEO gave reassurance that where there were large historical surpluses and this is proposal provided assurance that this funding will be reinvested in the school estate.</p> <p><b>Directors voted unanimously in favour of this proposal.</b></p>	
<p><b>8. HARLOW ACADEMY / EVOLVE TRUST</b></p>	
<p>Chair immediately declared his interest as Chair of the Evolve Trust and that he would not be taking part in any future voting on this matter.</p> <p>CEO gave an overview of Harlow Academy and its historical issues and mismanagement and how it is already making improvements via the Nexus involvement and would be a well-placed school in the Trust.</p> <p>The CEO detailed how the process with Harlow is moving at pace and mentioned the 16<sup>th</sup> March due diligence report for Directors to make a decision.</p> <p>The CEO detailed how he has had recent meetings with both parents and staff who are all behind a move to Nexus, along with Nottinghamshire County Council.</p> <p>The CEO explained how impressed he was with the pupils and parents and how it has a great building and was very well funded school, with a great potential to grow. If the school came to Nexus the CEO proposes setting up a transition board involving a representative from Nottinghamshire LA.</p> <p>The Chair seconded what the CEO said commenting that the school needs to be fully reset, and taking on board Harlow would be a great opportunity to form new partnerships in the area.</p> <p>SS stated we should be sure not to follow any similar steps and learn from the Evolve experience. CEO stated that it was a different set up at Nexus with much more accountability due to the size and structure of Nexus.</p> <p>PC questioned what the position was with the other SEND school mentioned linked to Harlow? CEO said that if Harlow comes over, Beech ASC school, that is also part of</p>	

<p>Evolve, could join Nexus too but that this was a decision for the RSC and the Beech school community.</p> <p>PC asked why Harlow became a problem school under the Evolve Trust and not Beech? CEO explained his view on this.</p> <p>GA explained she was away 16<sup>th</sup> March for the Board Meeting. CEO stated that she could vote beforehand once she had looked at all the papers which would be released a week prior to the meeting.</p>	
<p><b>9. CENTRAL TRUST STRUCTURE 2022-23</b></p>	
<p>CEO gave an overview of the new posts proposed, including the Executive lead roles which would give capacity to grow Mainstream and enhance school improvement capacity.</p> <p>PC / SS both asked what was the attraction of primary schools coming over? CEO explained it would be a poor strategy to just focus on SEN and how the values should be same for mainstream primary schools. The CEO went on to highlight how the Nexus model does work with Primary schools and the unique attributes of Nexus would sit across all schools.</p> <p>SS Asked if are we talking to any other Primary schools presently? GA questioned whether there are any geographical boundaries to growth ? CEO replied no on both counts.</p> <p>RP Asked where Rob Mulvey is being deployed? CEO explained that this was still undecided, with a few options for September 2022.</p> <p>CEO went on to discuss scenarios and budget forecasts linked to the proposals and believes appointments would aid growth and can be covered, as per the indicative budget scenarios.</p> <p>PC asked if the Trust will we be compromised financially if the strategy doesn't work? CEO reassured PC he would have enough notice to reallocate staff and that the balance of risk is offset against growth.</p> <p><b>Vote on staffing structure – unanimously approved</b></p>	
<p><b>10. SRMSAT CHECKLIST</b></p>	
<p>CS – explained how it has changed from the past. The document needs to be submitted to ESFA.</p> <p>Directors reviewed the report and had no questions.</p> <p><b>Vote on SRMSAT Checklist – unanimously approved</b></p>	
<p><b>11. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT</b></p>	
<p>CS Gave headlines from December to January and explained the Graph and how it illustrated certain times of year have specific trends, which should give Directors broader contextual knowledge.</p>	

<p>SB stated he was very impressed with the detail in the graph.</p> <p>SB asked about current liabilities and how they seem small and what's it made up of? CS clarified that it was due to being taken at the end of month and was made up of relatively small costs from energy bills etc.</p> <p>SB questioned dates on point 2.2 and CS stated this was in error and will update this for the next report.</p> <p>NJ asked about the additional income from grants and services and asked if there were associated costs yet to be allocated? CS replied that all costs were in the budget and many of the funds were not incurring additional costs as work was being undertaken by the executive team to fulfil obligations.</p>	
<b>12. POLICY REVIEW REPORT</b>	
<p>CEO gave overview of the assessment policy and the benefits of it.</p> <p>Chair asked can it be added to? CEO explained it should not need adding to and was deliberately simple and concise and allowed each school curriculum to be built on it.</p> <p>SB stated it was really helpful information</p> <p>Chair complimented JT on the new policy.</p> <p>All policy updates and the new assessment policy were agreed.</p> <p><b>JH to ensure all new policies are uploaded to the website and that a briefing is issued to staff.</b></p>	<p><b>JH</b> <b>16/3/22</b></p>
<b>13. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS – LETTER OF CONCERN</b>	
<p><b>13.1 Letter to Becton LGB</b></p> <p>The CEO gave an overview of the LGB situation following the letter from the Executive HT at Becton. Linked to de-amalgamation, the proposal is to install an intervention board. Dave Poulson (LGB Chair) has been consulted, agrees and has indicated he would still like to be involved and he would convey the decision to the LGB members. CEO also gave an outline of the proposed new structure with JH to Chair, a parent to stay on and new staff governors appointed.</p> <p>PC asked if the Trust had stress tested these problems across the other LGBs? CEO indicated the Trust has a clear insight from officer involvement in LGBs.</p> <p><b>All agreed unanimously to proceed</b></p> <p><b>13.2 NJC Pay Award</b> CEO outlined the Government settlement of a 1.75% pay increase for NJC staff. Nexus awarded a discretionary 2% in September 2021, and the CEO will consult with the unions on a further 1% from September 2022, which will leave Nexus MAT 1.25% above national, with realignment likely coming in 2023. This was consistent</p>	

with what Directors have already approved in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, but the CEO wanted confirmation to proceed to ensure good governance was evidenced.

### **All agreed unanimously to proceed**

#### **13.3 Judicial Review**

The CEO went on to discuss the Schools Supplementary Grant (SSG) funding issues, which he has discussed at length with Directors. Following the commissioning of barrister advice, there would be a higher degree of potential success to challenge LAs who are effusing to pass on any SSG via judicial review. CEO then updated the position with the LAs with Sheffield agreeing a 5% increase of Becton, whilst Doncaster have indicated they are not prepared to pass on and that Rotherham have refused to answer so far.

The CEO outlined the options and that, regrettably, he felt the Trust had no choice but to start the legal challenge process. The CEO outlined the risks of this, but that either way there are risks and the choice to not act leaves the school finances in an unsustainable position.

SS asked were CST involved with it? CEO felt they were doing all they could lobby for change at a national level, and he believed this was the most supported approach they could take and that Leora Cruddas was personally supporting the CST challenge.

PC asked what would be the negative, if a ruling goes against them. CEO explained the relationship with LA's could be negatively impacted, though Doncaster and Rotherham have shown no interest in collaborating or consulting openly in recent times.

### **Directors all approved the CEO actions**

#### **13.4 Chair of Standards**

CEO recommended to have an interim Chair for the next meeting and look at new directors after recruiting an education specialist director to cover this in the future. PC in principle happy to do it for the next meeting.

GA let the board know about a possible pilot project via the DFE they may be asked to take part in that she is involved in as an assessor, that would be funded and would give an accreditation linked to SIPS procurement excellence and will keep the board posted.

#### **14. REVIEW OF RISK**

No specific items raised.

#### **15. CONFIDENTIALITY**

No items were deemed confidential.

#### **16. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

Wednesday 30 <sup>th</sup> March 2022	17:00 – 19:30	Nexus HQ
Wednesday 27 <sup>th</sup> April 2022	17:00 – 19:30	Nexus HQ
Wednesday 25 <sup>th</sup> May 2022	17:00 – 19:30	Nexus HQ
Leadership Summit Tuesday 28 <sup>th</sup> June 2022	16:00 – 19:00	Craggs School, Maltby
Wednesday 29 <sup>th</sup> June 2022	17:00 – 19:30	Nexus HQ
Wednesday 20 <sup>th</sup> July 2022	17:00 – 19:30	Nexus HQ

### Minutes approved

CHAIR	SIGNATURE	DATE