



Minutes of the Board of Directors' meeting
Thursday 12 December 2024
Held at John Kyrle High School and Sixth Form Centre

Present: Sheila Boniface
Peter Cooper (Chief Executive Officer)
Craig Holden
Ken Hopkins (Chair)
Peter Jackson
Daniel Pearce-Higgins
Rachel Salter
Shirley Tully

In attendance: Sallyanne Griffiths (Chief Finance Officer)
Linda Watkins (Director of Governance)
Paul Deneen (JKHS LGB)

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Marion Hawkins, Katie Jackson and Andrea Marshall (Director of Quality).

2. Opening standing items

- I. There were no declarations of interests.
- II. Some discussion was deemed to be confidential during the meeting with a separate minute recorded.
- III. Any other business: Governorhub launch.

3. John Kyrle High School update

The Headteacher gave an informative presentation summarising stakeholder engagement feedback from staff and student questionnaires conducted in October 2024. These used a new platform 'schoolssurveys.com' surveying 30,000 teachers every day providing up to date responses. Overall feedback was positive confirming that staff at JKHS are more content than similar staff nationally; a breakdown of responses to several individual questions was provided. 73 staff (60%) had completed the recent staff survey.

The response rate from students was 659 (50%). To increase the response rate time will be allocated in the school day for students to complete surveys. Results evidence that students enjoy school and feel safe. Any areas of concern identified are addressed promptly. The Class Charts app is used throughout the school which is accessible to students and parents to measure pupil attendance, behaviour and progress.

There was discussion about data collection from stakeholders, particularly staff and parents, across secondary schools. JKHS had initiated the Class Charts app which

Action

could be extended to use at The Chantry who currently collect data at parents' evenings.

The Headteacher informed Directors that the school had previously undertaken an international student trip to Uganda. He had prepared a report about the trip seeking feedback from Directors regarding whether they considered the trip should take place this year. Concern was expressed by a Director whose company travels internationally concluding that they would prepare a written response. All Directors were invited to share their views by email which would be sent to the Headteacher.

Directors/
LJW

The Chair thanked the Headteacher for his presentation with appreciation reiterated.

4. Chair's Report

The Chair gave a specific welcome to Paul Deneen, Chair of JKHS LGB. The Chair reported that he had participated in Oxbridge student interviews at HSFC supporting the Head of English which was an enjoyable experience. He will also assist with judging 'Articulation', an initiative HSFC is participating in run by the National Gallery.

5. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The Board agreed to approve the minutes and confidential minute of the meeting held on 17 October 2024. There was only one matter arising to increase thresholds in the financial regulations which had been implemented.

6. CEO's Report

The CEO presented his report for discussion which included some confidential items which were recorded in a separate minute. The Labour Government's policy for education including initiatives for mental health support, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and changes to the Ofsted framework with ten categories being introduced for schools was summarised. Funding for acadamisation conversions has been withdrawn; regional improvement for standards and excellence (RISE) teams will support failing schools and Trusts. DfE has announced the outcome of the qualifications reform for Level 3 programmes and confirmed delivery in 2025; Applied General Qualifications have not been withdrawn.

DfE has funded a 5.5% pay award for teachers in academies; this has been implemented in the schools but paused in the colleges pending the outcome of the Sixth Form College Association (SFCA) negotiations and their request to hold its implementation. (Currently sixth forms which have not academised will not receive the funded pay award). Directors fully supported implementation of the pay award for academies, acknowledging this entitlement which was applicable to sixth form colleges who had taken the decision to academise. In discussion, the Board agreed that the 5.5% pay award will be implemented for teachers in the colleges in January 2025 for inclusion in February 2025 pay, which will be unconsolidated.

SAG

The Trust is continuing to explore potential opportunities and partnerships. It has been working with Richard Huish College with several staff visiting to conduct a quality review providing new ideas to embed such as encouraging staff to do new things. The Trust has established forums for Heads, Principals and deputies to share good practice and held a successful joint CPD event recently. The Trust is

concentrating on attracting teachers to the Trust with discussions with Worcester University and Warwick University to establish mechanisms to attract ECTs. In response to a question, the CEO stated that the Trust is engaging with several initiatives to attract teachers.

7. Strategic Plan 2024-27 operating plan progress

The CEO gave a verbal update confirming that progress has been made in the majority of areas included the operating plan. Some elements of the strategic plan are historical following the change of Government. A written report will be provided against the operating plan at the next meeting.

PC/AM

8. Finance report

The finance report to October 2024 was presented in detail at the Finance and Resources Committee which showed the budget year to date was c£1m better than budget which related to the front loading of income and delay in paying the teachers' pay award. Student numbers were presented across the academies showing growth at KEVI. The accommodation strategy will be prioritised on growth, health and safety, and fire safety. The balance sheet is strong with £4.7m in the bank. Financial benchmarking is being developed but remains in its infancy with initial discussion by the F&R Committee.

The finance report to November 2024 had just been issued which showed a similar position with an EBITDA of £158k year to date. The CFO expressed concerns regarding inflation and National Insurance contributions which, she anticipated, would be recovered in the supply chain. In view of this, the Trust is reviewing options to purchase IT equipment before April 2025 in an attempt to reduce costs.

9. Summary from Committees: 28 November 2024

The written summary from committees was discussed with Chairs highlighting key issues and items for approval.

- I. Audit and Risk Committee (including confidential minute). The committee held an open meeting with all Directors to discuss the draft annual accounts with the external auditors. The following items were approved by the Board at the recommendation of the Committee:
 - a. TIAA's internal audit scrutiny annual report 2023/24
 - b. Audit Committee's annual report year ending 31 August 2024
 - c. Going concern assessment confirming the Trust is a going concern for the following 12 months
 - d. Annual accounts to 31 August 2024 for submission to ESFA and filing with Companies House
 - e. Letters of representation (audit and regularity) to be signed by the Chair and CEO

SAG

A Director requested more details about the cyber-attack; this had resulted from a phishing attack when three members of staffs' emails had been compromised. The Trust took immediate action following due process to address the issue. Subsequently, awareness training has been reiterated throughout the Trust. There was a question as to whether staff complete IT security training annually which would be ascertained.

PC

The Trust will tender for its internal and external auditors in 2025.

<p>II.</p> <p>III.</p> <p>IV.</p>	<p>Finance and Resources Committee: The Committee Chair summarised key issues discussed at the meeting with the specific following items presented for approval. The Board <u>approved</u> the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Gender pay report March 2024. This provided a snapshot of the position as of March each year. The gender pay gap has increased from 15% to 18% with males paid more than females which is related to job roles and is reflective of the lower paid, term time roles undertaken by female employees. There is no difference in pay by gender of comparable roles which are paid the same pay grade. The gender pay report will be published on the Trust's website. b. Staff pay award <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. SFC teachers: this was addressed in item 5 as part of the CEO's report. ii. Schools: Teachers have been awarded 5.5% as per the outcome of national negotiations. iii. Support staff in schools will be awarded £1,290 or 2.5% whichever is greater c. Communications and engagement strategy d. Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement which will be published on the website e. Pay policy and procedure <p>Curriculum & Quality Committee: no items to approve. The Committee Chair referred to the summary of the committee's business which had focused on student data noting the correlation between attendance and achievement, the safeguarding report and the quality report.</p> <p>Search & Governance Committee: The resolution from the Committee to recommend Members appoint Jane Britton as a Director of the Trust was noted. Directors supported this appointment concluding that Jane Britton's experience would further strengthen the Board.</p>	<p>SAG</p> <p>AM</p>
<p>10. LGB Governor appointments</p>	<p>The Board <u>approved</u> the following appointments for 4-year terms in office with the exception of the Associate Student Governor at WSFC who would remain in post for the duration of his course.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. WSFC LGB appointments retrospectively effective from 1 December 2024 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Elle Beale (external governor) b. Grahame Davies (external governor) c. Chantal Pottage (external governor) d. Paul Rushton (parent governor) e. Wisal Bashar (associate student governor) II. The Chantry LGB appointments from 1 January 2025 as external governors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Edwards Holmes b. Alison Finnegan c. Raymond Gillespie d. Claire Howitt e. Gabriel Moores f. Maddy Allcock g. Elaine Chandler h. Andy Raine 	

11. Items from Committees for information

- I. Audit & Risk Committee:
 - a. Risk Register
- II. Finance & Resources Committee:
 - a. HR report
 - b. Health and safety, and estates report
- III. Curriculum & Quality Committee:
 - a. Data pack, student performance headline data
 - b. Quality report including quality cycle and summary from Self-Assessment Reports (post 16) and School Development Plans (schools)
 - c. Safeguarding report
 - d. Student destination report

12. Summary from LGB meetings

- I. WSFC 25 November 2024
- II. KEVI 21 October 2024
- III. HSFC 24 October 2024
- IV. JKHS no meeting
- V. The Chantry no meeting

13. Any other business

Governorhub would be launched to Directors as a platform to store and access Board and Committee papers. Instructions would be provided and assistance was offered to use the platform.

14. Date of Next Meeting

AGM: **Tuesday 17 December 2024** commencing at 5.00pm on Teams
MAT Conference: **7-8 February 2025** – The Abbey Hotel, Malvern and WSFC
Board meeting: **Thursday 10 April 2025** commencing at 6.00 pm at WSFC