

## East Midlands Academy Trust - Board Meeting

Pyramus House, Roman Way, Grange Park, Northampton NN4 5EA – **Hybrid meeting**

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2021, 10:00am

### Second meeting of academic year 2021/2022

These minutes reflect the order of the agenda and not necessarily the order in which items were discussed.

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action
1. Welcome	<p><b>Present:</b></p> <p><b>Kevin Crompton</b> (EMAT: Trustee) – Chair 📞</p> <p><b>Andy Davis</b> (EMAT: Trustee) 📞</p> <p><b>Ayo Salam</b> (EMAT: Trustee) 📞 <i>left at 12.10pm</i></p> <p><b>Fiona Wheeler</b> (EMAT: Trustee) – 📞</p> <p><b>Stephen Morales</b> (EMAT: Trustee) 📞 <i>Joined the meeting at 10:35am</i></p> <p><b>John Harris</b> (EMAT: Member) 📞 <i>Joined the meeting at 10:55am</i></p> <p><b>Joshua Coleman</b> (EMAT: CEO)</p> <p><b>Lorna Beard</b> (EMAT: Head of Inclusion &amp; Training Hub) 📞 <i>left at 12.00pm</i></p> <p><b>Nattia Dhana</b> (EMAT: Management Accountant) <i>left at 12.00pm</i></p> <p><b>John Lawson</b> (EMAT: Head of Education) <i>left at 12.00pm</i></p> <p><b>Daryl Unit</b> (EMAT: Head of Shared Services) 📞 <i>left at 12.00pm</i></p> <p><b>Monica Juan</b> (EMAT: Head of Governance &amp; Compliance) - Minutes 📞</p> <p>The chair welcomed all and reminded all present that the matters raised within this meeting would remain confidential until the minutes were agreed and signed off.</p>	
2. Apologies	Apologies from <b>Paul Wheeler, David Houghton and Leigh Jones</b> were received and accepted by the board.	
3. Quoracy	The meeting was confirmed as quorate.	
4. Declarations of Interest	There were no declarations of interest pertaining to this agenda in addition to those already recorded on the annual Register of Interests.	
5. Minutes of EMAT TB meeting held on 20/09/2021	<p>The minutes of the meetings held on the 21/07/2021, were reviewed and agreed to be an accurate representation of the meetings.</p> <p>KC agreed to physically sign the minutes at the next face to face meeting.</p>	
6. Action Log from 20/09/2021	All actions from the previous meeting had been completed.	
7. Updates:	<p><i>Committee chairs provided a verbal update from the last meeting:</i></p> <p><b>S&amp;P:</b> JC updated the board on behalf of LJ. The committee had discussed National Curriculum tests and mock assessments. There had been a drop on the last published data, but a plan was being put in place for schools to bridge the gap. FFS data looked positive.</p>	

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	<p>The primary curriculum was strong, and support was in place for HTs to be able to deliver the broad curriculum at the right level. The secondary curriculum still had significant areas that needed improving and substantial work was being done around making it broad enough. To improve consistency of delivery support was being provided to the Heads of Department.</p> <p>Tailored school support plans had been put in place drawn from the school improvement priorities. A carefully structured work schedules for AIPs had been created with tasks to review the plans at each visit including impact.</p> <p>Work was ongoing developing the T&amp;L conceptual framework for the trust with the support of HTs. The final document would underpin the teaching principles across the trust to ensure consistency of delivery.</p> <p>There had been significant attendance issues across schools for staff and pupils. Resilience was low and effective supply coverage was difficult to obtain. However, the general picture remained above national average.</p> <p><b>In response to a question from a trustee regarding whether there was an issue with Early Years</b> JC confirmed that the national picture showed that young children had been affected greatly by the pandemic. The Phonics gap was still significant but there were interventions in place to narrow the gap.</p> <p>Trustees wished to thank all staff and pupils across the trust.</p> <p><b>FHRE:</b> AD reported that the committee had been presented with the budget papers and had recommended them for ratification. The financial picture across the schools was very healthy with the ICFP tool working well and most schools on budget.</p> <p>Trustees thanked the Finance team for their work.</p> <p><b>A&amp;R:</b> AS reported that the external and internal audits had been presented to the committee. Both audits were clean and have reassured trustees that processes were working well. An update in GDPR compliance had also been presented showing that the compliance level around this subject had dramatically improved from the previous year. The pension fund deficit had been discussed and the committee was content that this was being deal correctly. The internal audit plan including cybersecurity had been approved and auditors' representation letters recommended for approval.</p> <p>Trustees thanked the Finance team for their work and DU for his tenacity around GDPR.</p>	
<p><b>8. Trustees' allocation - update</b></p>	<p>KC and SM had not had the opportunity to contact the schools yet.</p> <p>AD and FW had had to cancel their visit to PWS and Castle respectively due to COVID restrictions.</p> <p>Trustees agreed to re-engage with the schools after the Christmas break.</p>	

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	<p>AS had connected with Orchard and found the whole experience very useful. He had been able to discuss the effect of COVID within the school and what processes had been put in place to mitigate the impact. The HT had informed AS of a complain that had reached the media and how the school had dealt with it. The Local Authority had reassured the school that they were acting correctly, and the HT had re-established a positive relationship with the family.</p> <p><b>In response to a question from a trustee regarding whether COVID had impacted the number of complaints across the trust</b> JC informed trustees that the number of parental complaints was higher than normal, covering bullying, SEND support, homework and mainly low-level concerns. However, the central team was providing support to HTs in an attempt to de-escalate complaints and solve them at operational level. So far no complaints had reached stage 3 of the complaints policy which would require governance to intervene.</p>	
<p><b>9. CEO Report</b></p>	<p><i>The CEO report had been distributed with the agenda for this meeting.</i></p> <p>JC recognised that the term had been stressful for most staff, particularly in the schools, as they have been dealing with high amounts of COVID absences.</p> <p>JC reported the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant attendances issues across the trust for staff and pupils.</li> <li>• New central team school improvement structure in place.</li> <li>• KPIs developing satisfactorily.</li> <li>• Increased HR support for staff with positive relationships with unions and staff remaining engaged.</li> <li>• Website migration underway and expected to be finalised in January.</li> <li>• Need to increase diversity of governance although in line with national picture.</li> </ul> <p>Trustees discussed the report at length and agreed with each of the department findings.</p> <p><b>In response to a question from a trustee regarding what the next steps for the NIA were,</b> JC explained that the school was still growing and there were several areas that required strengthening. Links between Primary &amp; Secondary curriculum needed to be aligned. COVID had impacted massively the work already put in place with behaviour becoming one of the main priorities to address. New appointments to strengthen Prospect and SEND were underway.</p> <p>Trustees thanked JC for his report.</p>	
<p><b>10. Finance matters:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Annual Report &amp; Financial</b></li> </ul>	<p><i>Papers had been distributed with the agenda for this meeting.</i></p> <p>ND presented to trustees the Annual Report &amp; Financial Statement 2020/21 and the Auditors Management letters of representation which had been recommended by the FHRE committee.</p>	

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<p>Statement 2020/21</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive Auditor's management letters</li> </ul>	<p><b>Trustees unanimously approved the Annual Report and Financial Statements and received the Auditor's management letter.</b></p> <p>ND informed that the team was currently working in the November accounts. The October accounts were operating close to budget with no areas of concern. Investment was continuing across the trust, particularly in PWS and Shepherdswell.</p> <p><b>In response to a question from a trustee regarding whether the previous COVID staff honorarium would be repeated</b> ND informed trustees that staff would not receive a monetary reward but a benefit in kind. The trust was investing in wider support to assist staff to alleviate the impact of the pandemic.</p> <p>Trustees thanked ND for her report.</p>	
<p>11. Forum's update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion/SEND</li> <li>• Employees (within CEO report)</li> <li>• GDPR report</li> </ul>	<p><i>Forum chairs gave a verbal update.</i></p> <p><b>Inclusion:</b> LB reported that it had been a busy term for all schools. The forum had focussed the discussion on the Inclusion Festival and resources provided for staff. The Light Bulb accreditation had been difficult to access as staff had found challenging to be released due to COVID absences. The accreditation had been pushed to the Spring term. Work with the St Andrews foundation was ongoing with a package of support in place accessed by Primaries and Prospect. Guiding Young Minds was also working closely with the NIA. PP and Recovery Plus reports were in track to be published by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021.</p> <p><b>Safeguarding:</b> LB reported that all schools' SCR were compliant. The concern with PWS had been a mapping issue, not a compliance one. LB assured trustees that SCR were not posing a risk in any of the schools as the document's expectations were higher than the required for compliance. The forum had discussed next steps around curriculum and how to teach children to stay safe. There was a consensus that a more holistic approach was needed, looking at understanding the needs of each community and how to reflect this in the teaching. The trust was working closely with staff and social services to identify those children that had fallen off radar during the pandemic.</p> <p><b>SEND:</b> LB informed trustees that the works to merge Orchard &amp; Shepherdswell department were ongoing and on track. A new SEND curriculum offer was being developed with the support of NP. She would continue to work with the SENCOS and produce a new handbook.</p> <p><b>Training Hub:</b> LB reported that the Hub continue to develop, with a wider training offer in place, a new receptionist appointed, and an online booking system being explored. A partnership with Autism society had been established. The liaison with Hamilton school had been very productive, helping to develop a common language. Finally, links with other settings were accelerating the development of expertise across the trust.</p>	

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	<p><b>Pupil Parliament:</b> The PP had been appointed, with representation from all schools and Key Stages across the trust. They would be looking at Schools Uniforms, Healthy Eating and Online Safety issues from January.</p> <p>Trustees thanked LB for her report.</p> <p><b>GDPR:</b> DU informed trustees that the forum was showing increasing maturity, being able to identify and act upon breaches rapidly. Since the presentation of the Audit report to the FHRE committee, progress had taken place in all areas apart from Data Assets and Transfer. Plans had been put in place to address this. Risks had significantly dropped, and sensible investment had been put in place.</p> <p>Trustees thanked DU for his report.</p> <p><b>HR:</b> RM reported that the first forum of the academic year had taken place on 2<sup>nd</sup> December. Although staff morale was good there was a general consensus that staff were more tired than normally. This was due to the challenging situation most schools were experiencing around staff absences. Mental Health Aids training would take place in January, this would provide a Mental Health Aid in each school. The Employee Assist Programme was successfully being used by staff and was rated very positively. RM informed that most staff felt happy working for the trust.</p> <p>Trustees thanked RM for her report.</p>	
<p><b>12. Policies for ratification:</b></p>	<p><i>All policies had been distributed with the agenda for this meeting</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>EMAT Admissions Policy 2023/2024</b> – MJ informed trustees that this policy would go to consultation in January to adjust the PWS and NIA PAN. Once consultation finished it would be uploaded to the websites.</li> <li>• <b>EMAT Equalities policy 2021/2025</b></li> <li>• <b>EMAT Trustees Conflict of Interest policy</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Trustees unanimously agreed to ratify all polices</b></p>	<p><b>MJ upload policies to all EMAT websites.</b></p>
<p><b>13. Trust Growth (for discussion):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>New Schools</b></li> <li>• <b>Ofsted: Summary of MAT evaluation</b></li> </ul>	<p><i>JC reported verbally to trustees</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EMAT had not been successful in their bid for the school in Stanton Cross.</li> <li>• Thrapston had been contacted several times without an answer.</li> <li>• The Willows in MK had shown interest to join the trust.</li> </ul> <p>JC and KC would meet the RSC in January where plans for future growth would be discussed.</p>	

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	The <i>Ofsted: Summary evaluations of multiacademy trust</i> document had been submitted for discussion. Trustees agree that it would be a good experience to have an Ofsted summary evaluation carried out for EMAT.	
14. Next Agenda items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standard Items</li> </ul>	
15. AOB	<b>HR Pay Recommendations</b> ( <i>Item deferred from FHRE meeting</i> )  <b>Please see confidential minute</b>	
16. Dates of next meetings	Dates of meetings 2021/2022: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Friday 29th April 2022 @10am</li> <li>Wednesday 20th July 2022 @10am</li> </ul>	<b>Calendar appointments have been sent</b>

**Meeting closed at 12.45pm**

**Signed by Kevin Crompton, Chair of Trustees**

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**Date**.....

**East Midlands Academy Trust**

Action Log of the Trust Board meeting held on 13.12.2021

Item	Action	Owner
1.	Resend trustees school allocation contact details	MJ
2.	Review Appraisal Policy/Process	RM
3.	Upload policies to website	MJ