East Midlands Academy Trust Audit & Risk committee
Tuesday 20th April 2021 at 10.00am - Meeting to take place virtually via Microsoft Teams
First meeting of academic year 2020-2021

These minutes reflect the order of the agenda, not necessarily the order of discussion

Agenda item	Discussion	Action
1. Welcome and introductions	**Present:** **Fiona Wheeler** (Trustee) **Ayo Salam** (Trustee) **Andy Davis** (Trustee) **Asvin Morjaria** (Trustee) **Stephen Morales** (Trustee) *joined the meeting at 10.05am* **Joshua Coleman** (CEO: EMAT) **Paul Wheeler** (Finance and Operations Director: EMAT) **Monica Juan** (Head of Governance & Safeguarding) - minutes **In attendance:** **Munya Mufukare** - Management Accountant: EMAT **Daryl Unitt** – Head of Shared Services: EMAT **Chris Rising** - Internal Audit Director: Macintyre Hudson *joined the meeting at 10.30am* AM welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded all of the need for confidentiality until the minutes were signed off.	
2. Apologies	There were no apologies	
3. Quorum	The clerk confirmed that the meeting was quorate.	
4. Declarations of interest	The Chair called for any additional declarations of interest pertaining to this agenda not already recorded on the annual Register of Interests. No interests were declared	
5. Minutes of A&R 30.11.2020, including confidential minutes & matters arising not appearing on the Action Log	The minutes of the meeting held on 30.11.2020 had been distributed with the agenda for this meeting and were agreed to be an accurate representation of the meeting. The Chair agreed to physically sign the minutes once lockdown restrictions had been lifted.	
6. Action Log from the meeting on 30/11/2020	1. Revise COVID risk 2 wording in register. **- DONE** 2. Introduce risk movement in any future risk documents **- DONE** 3. EvolveNorth to provide GDPR collaboration with other trusts **- DONE** 4. Add standard GDPR item to A&R and TB agenda **- DONE** 5. Add GDPR to the risk register as high risk. **- DONE**	

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7. COVID 19 update • Risk Assessments • Schools Update	*JC & PW provided a verbal update* PW reported that all schools had had the RAs updated to reflect any changes in the government guidance and RAs had been included in the main Risk Register. COVID mitigation measured would continue in place until further notice. JC reported that Catch-up funding was being deployed across the trust and a breakdown of activities and impact would be presented to trustees at the next TB meeting. Disadvantaged pupils were the group most affected with the full return of pupils, and some behavioural issues had been identified. Most vulnerable children were having issues adjusting to larger class sizes again after attending school during the pandemic under a higher teacher/student ratio. Some of the catch-up funding was being used to provide activities for this particular group around their reintegration to normal school life and manage anxiety. Performance outputs in secondary were showing a positive trajectory towards the predicted assessment centre grades. Primary internal assessments were showing expected progress with some concern around reading and writing. Trustees thanked PW and JC for their report. There were no questions from trustees.	

8. Internal Audit Reports:
•Payroll
•Recruitment & Talent Management
	The Internal Audit Report papers had been distributed with the agenda for this meeting.
	
	The Chair welcome CR to the meeting. CR presented the highlights of the internal audits.
	
	• **Payroll report:** Very clean audit with no significant weaknesses in the design or application of controls. There were no questions from trustees.
	• **Recruitment and Talent Management report:** CR explained that there was an opportunity to integrate some systems further within the organisation, taking the next steps to provide a process that would maximise the needs of the trust and individual schools. Recommendations had been identified around the following areas:
	    o Workforce planning roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities
	    o HR Policy and HR Manual
	    o HR statistics and Reporting
	
	In response to a question from a trustee regarding the next steps in the journey PW confirmed that a plan was already in place to implement the recommendations drawn from the report, including a restructure within the central team to streamline services and the purchase of a new HR operational system to minimise human error, with both items incorporated into the next budget. Part of the direction of travel would be the creation of a training centre above the central office lead by a new Learning & Development officer to	

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	develop talent within the trust and provide resilience and succession planning within the workforce. **In response to a question from a trustee regarding whether the new HR operational system (I-Trent) would have a LMS function incorporated that could record the learning & development of staff** PW agreed to explore whether this function was included within the current specification or could be purchased as an ad-on. Trustees thanked CR for his report and requested PW to provide a progress report moving forward. ==**Trustees unanimously agreed to adopt both reports.**== *CR left the meeting at 10.56am*	**PW to confirm I-Trent LMS functionality** **PW to provide progress report at next meeting**
9. Finance Update	*PW provided a verbal update* PW reported that the Management Accounts had been presented to the FHRE the previous week. The Financial position remained on track with the current £277K surplus year to date. PW explained that the surplus was mainly attached to the NIA restructure and would fall in line the budget during the second part of the year. Some of it would be utilised to refit the commercial areas at the front of the NIA building to provide alternative provision, the mental health hub and further Sixth Form areas. Several other projects were taking place across the trust to upgrade facilities. The trust had submitted a £70k claim back for FSM. All ICFPs were currently being prepared by the Finance Team and would be presented to trustees at the next FHRE meeting. Trustees thanked PW for his report. There were no questions from trustees.	
10. Risk Register – Update	*The Risk Register had been distributed with the agenda for this meeting.* MM presented the document and informed trustees that most of the individual risk owners across the organisation had received training on how complete the risk register, with guidance around completing risk metrics being shared. MM explained that this would provide a more accurate risk assessment of each school moving forward. PW clarified that MM had been working intensively since January, embedding the risk registers across all schools, incorporating the COVID risks to the main register as per the audit recommendations and delivering the training. **In response to a question from a trustee regarding whether the schools had the capacity to deal with the risk register and whether the risk owners had**	

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	the right skills to confidently deal with the extra responsibility MM explained that although schools had been given responsibility to keep the risk register up to date, in order to avoid falling behind with the task a group had been created with all the school risk owners. Monthly meetings had started to take place to discuss the RR, ensuring that everybody worked with the document at least once a month and were able to share best practice. This type of support would continue for as long as it was necessary. MM clarified that as overall risk manager he was able to monitor through the system the input of the risk owners and whether any mitigations in place were correctly allocated. Trustees discussed at length the document, the different risks for each school, the way numbers were used to reflect the metrics in the different categories and whether it would be wise to liaise with other MATs that had developed collaboratively with their trust leaders a way to present complex DATA to stakeholders in a more digestible format. **Trustees agreed for SM to facilitate contact between PW/MM and Diverse Academies Trust**. In order to be able to focus around the most important issues in the organisation, Trustees considered whether a one-page summary within the report, identifying the higher risks across the organisation, would be more useful to the board. **Trustees requested for MM to investigate a way to enhance how the RR dashboard data was presented to trustees**. They praised the amount of information and level of detail in the document and thanked MM for his work.	**SM to liaise with PW** **MM to review RR dashboard data for next meeting.**
11. GDPR - Action Plan Update	*The GDPR update report had been distributed with the agenda for this meeting.* DU presented the report highlights: • DPO had been outsourced to GDPR Sentry • A new GDPR suite of policies had been created • DPLs had been appointed across all schools • ICO registration had been updated. DU summarised the process followed with a detailed explanation of a couple of recorded DATA breaches that had taken place in some of the schools and had been reported to the ICO. None of them had incurred any sanctions and all recommendations had been immediately actioned. DU informed trustees that although the current number of DATA breaches recorded across the organisation was very low, this would likely increase over the coming months, as more rigour was applied to GDPR within the organisation. **In response to a question from a trustee regarding the different SAR types and how this would be recorded** DU confirmed that the new arrangements will help to finesse the way this was presented to trustees and moving forward SARs would be categorised accordingly.	**DU to refine SAR table to accommodate SAR types**

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	In response to a question from a trustee regarding the rationale behind the decision to appoint an external DPO instead of training someone in-house DU confirmed that after careful consideration and following recommendations from the EvolveNorth report the decision had been taken to appoint an external DPO, to provide the in depth GDPR expertise that none of the current members within the central team owned, as well as acting as an independent body with the ability to challenge and support the organisation. **In response to a question from a trustee regarding whether the organisation would be GDPR compliant by the end of August** DU responded that although the immediate risks had been addressed, all DPL in schools had received training and the implementation of all recommendations was well underway, the prospect of the organisation being fully compliant by the end of August was unlikely. This was due to the fact that the GDPR journey was not only about putting the systems in place but about embedding them and demonstrating resilience. However, DU was confident that the ICO would be pleased with the systems that EMAT had currently put in place. **In response to a question from a trustee regarding whether EvolveNorth would still be involved moving forward** PW confirmed that they would comeback in the Autumn term to produce a gap analysis that would look at the original recommendations and any subsequent improvements. The report would be presented at the A&R December meeting. Trustees discussed the report at length and agreed to be kept regularly updated about GDPR developments. **PW confirmed that EMAT would have addressed the issues raised in the Evolve North gap analysis report by November 2021 and a follow up audit would then take place to verify the actions undertaken**. DU confirmed that trustees and local governors and trustees would be given access to Sentry GDPR training as part of the compliance journey. Trustees thanked DU for his comprehensive report and were pleased to see a focus beyond only financial risks.	**EvolveNorth report to be presented at the December meeting.** **Audit to take place after EvolveNorth gap analysis.** **MJ/DU to provide access to training to governance.**
12. Safeguarding Update	*JC provided a verbal update* JC informed trustees that following the *'Everyone's invited'* campaign in the media, all relevant policies had been updated to include a statement informing stakeholders about the stance of the trust regarding sexual abuse and how to report any concerns. Particularly focus was given to children's voice and how this was collated, and the NSPCC helpline number had been widely advertised across schools so everybody had access to it. Ofsted was also looking at their own inspection regime and would conduct spot checks with any organisation that had been flagged up. So far there had not been any links in the 'Everyone's invited' website involving EMAT schools.	

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	Following the NIA safeguarding inspection in December, all safeguarding processes had been reviewed and updated across the organisation and comprehensive audits had been conducted in all schools with action plans specifically put in place to address any highlighted gaps. **In response to a question from a trustee regarding how children's voice could be effectively collated in the primary phase** JC explained that RSE was thoroughly explored through PSHE and the new Jigsaw curriculum, with resources specifically tailored to each year group from EYFS to Y11 and shared with parents/carers. **In response to a question from a trustee regarding how student's voice could be captured without any victimisation and what could be done to avoid students feeling 'cancelled'** JC explained that, as part of the trust values, all schools were committed to create an inclusive environment. Schools followed a holistic approach where pupils were encouraged to express themselves without fear of reprisals. In order to monitor this, student's forums and surveys were conducted regularly with any intelligence obtained acted upon swiftly. **In response to a question from a trustee regarding how much support was provided by the DfE before the introduction of any new policies/changes** JC explained that sometimes consultation around certain matters would take place giving plenty of time to schools to implement any necessary changes. However, most of the time guidance would be released with the expectation that organisations would adopt their own policies accordingly. A robust discussion took place around safeguarding within the organisation and how robust were the systems currently in place. Trustees were happy that the trust was following and implementing the correct procedures and thanked JC for his report.	
13. Policies	*All policies had been distributed with the agenda for this meeting.* • GDPR Suite of policies ==Trustees unanimously agreed to ratify the new Sentry GDPR suite of policies.== • Critical Incident Business Plan **In response to a question from a trustee regarding whether the CIB plan had been tested** PW confirmed that once approved, the plan would be distributed to schools and MM would liaise with them to test it. ==Trustees requested to see the results of the tests and agreed unanimously to ratify the policy.==	**MJ to upload all policies to the website** **MM to report CIB Plan tests results**

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14. Items for next meeting	• Internal Audits progress report • GDPR update	
15. AOB	SM informed the committee that moving forward he would be taking part in a new mentoring scheme, after a thorough discussion trustees agreed there was not conflict of interest to declare.	
16. DONM	**Dates for the academic year 2020/2021 have been set.** Please note the date for the next meeting had been changed to: • Tuesday 6th July 2021 at 10am	**Invites to meetings had been sent**

The meeting ended at 12.05pm

Action log of the Audit and Risk committee meeting held 20.04.2020

No.	Action	Owner
1.	Confirm I-Trent LMS functionality	**PW**
2.	Produce internal audits progress report	**PW**
3.	Introduce a summary page in the RR identifying higher risks.	**MM**
4.	Liaise with Diverse Academies Trust to explore DATA presentation	**SM/PW/MM**
5.	Amend SAR table to accommodate SAR types	**DU**
6.	EvolveNorth report to be presented at the December meeting.	**DU**
7.	GDPR Audit to take place after EvolveNorth gap analysis.	**PW/DU**
8.	Provide access to Sentry training to trustees and governors	**DU/MJ**
9.	Upload policies to website	**MJ**
10.	Report CIB Plan tests results once they have been conducted across all schools	**MM**