

# Board of Trustees Minutes

Date Of Meeting	Wednesday 17 May 2017
Venue	ACE Schools, Bretonside   Training Room
Time	18:00 – 20:00

## Attendance:

### Trustees

Dr Tim Searle

[tim.searle@acemat.uk](mailto:tim.searle@acemat.uk)

Mr Peter McDonnell

[peter.mcdonnell@acemat.uk](mailto:peter.mcdonnell@acemat.uk)

Mrs Sarah Gillett

[sarah.gillett@aceschools.net](mailto:sarah.gillett@aceschools.net)

Mrs Sue Bickle

[sue.bickle@acemat.uk](mailto:sue.bickle@acemat.uk)

### Present

Mr Paul Turner

[paul.turner@aceschools.net](mailto:paul.turner@aceschools.net)

Mrs Cheryl Reuben

[cheryl.reuben@aceschools.net](mailto:cheryl.reuben@aceschools.net)

Chair

Vice Chair

CEO & Head Teacher ACE Schools

Plymouth

Trustee & Chair of Governors Courtlands

CFO

Clerk



1. **Chairman's introduction**

TS proceeded to welcome the Board. The Chair acknowledged the questions sent to all Trustees by AW with regards to the financial papers circulated and the subsequent email response from PT. TS advised the Board that these items would arise later in the agenda.

TS advised the Board that AB had submitted her apologies for the meeting. This followed a discussion pertaining to AB workload and TS had suggested that in light of her significant recent work pressures, the Board both understood and sympathised with her current position. He recommended that AB took a sabbatical from the Trust until September 2017 which the Board agreed. AB would continue to receive meeting minutes but no other papers at this time. PT advised TS that the Board should remember that even if AB does not attend meetings, her role and responsibilities within the Trust would continue to remain in place. TS advised that he would ensure AB was aware of her continuing obligation to the Trust.

2. **Apologies.**

Joan Watkins

**Accepted**

Alastair Wright

**Accepted**

Annette Benny

**Accepted**

3. **Verbal declarations of interest.**

None

4. **Approve minutes of the previous meeting**

Approved and Signed

5. **Matters & Actions arising from previous meeting.**

Actions brought forward:

**Action 1:** TS to be registered as a member with IOD.

**Ongoing**

**Action 2:** AB & JW ICT Acceptable Use Policies to be signed and returned.

**Ongoing**

**Action 3:** PT to bring structure of ACE Family to the next meeting.

**SG will provide a full update at next meeting.**

**Action 4:** PT to bring the Financial Process Manual to be signed off.

**Complete**

6. **Update from the Head of Finance.**

PT summarised the financial reports for ACE Schools Plymouth. PM and SB both advised that they had not previously seen the reply from PT to AW questions although they had received the emails. **Action 1:** This matter will be referred to ACE IT support. PM & SB were provided with full copies during the meeting.

**Questions:**

**AW via email:** Is agency staff the best value for money?

**PT:** Referred to the answer on the email reply that although the cost appeared greater, agency staff were on a 39 week contract rather than a full year. This creates a saving of around £2k per teacher and £1.7k per TA p.a.

**PM:** Will we continue to use agency staff permanently at some provisions?

**SG:** Until such time as we have secured a longer term contract with other LA's or we have a free school in place. Following conversion, if we take on a teacher we can offer a 12 month

contract with a 3 or 6 month probation period. This incurs a lower risk to ACE should anything change and suite the style of offering a bespoke provision.

PT advised the Board that whilst referring to Agency staff, the staff supplied remained consistent as per the needs of the students. SG advised that the use of Agency staff allowed a 'try before we buy' which minimised risk and filtered the quality of the staff.

PT advised the Board that there was a lag between having staff on site and he contracts/purchase orders and invoices being received so although some income have been agreed, those which haven't been paid are not included in the figures. Relationships with Devon and Cornwall LA are very good and responses have been prompt when this information has been chased.

### **The Board accepted the Financial Reports for ACE Schools Plymouth.**

PT summarised the Courtlands Financial Reports. PT advised that although the expenses are slightly above budget, this does include the MAT joining costs which have now been charged although haven't had a large adverse effect on the figures.

#### **Questions:**

**SB:** Before Joining ACE MAT, Courtlands had termly finance meetings at Governor Level. Do the Board think this should continue or should we be handing full control to the MAT?

**SG:** The Courtlands LGB should be clear on the financial position and reporting. PT of one of his team should attend a Courtlands LGB meeting to clarify and field any questions.

**PT:** Courtlands will be used to the PCC cash accounting system which is very different to ACE Schools MAT. A lot of the HR admin/payroll is now centralised however, we will have support on site at Courtlands.

**Action 2:** PT or one of his finance team will attend every other Courtlands LGB meeting to field any questions.

**Action 3:** SB and PT will arrange to meet in the next few weeks to ensure SB is clear on the finance reporting.

### **The Board accepted the Financial Reports for Courtlands.**

#### **7. SEN & AP Funding Report.**

PT summarised the content of the SEN and AP funding report.

### **The Board accepted the recommendation to accept the outcome for the SEN/AP top up funding.**

TS advised the Board that he had met with Judith Harwood who advised that she wasn't fully aware of the extent of the situation. She has full support for the work of ACE Schools Plymouth. TS raised with her comments made which had been unhelpful to identifying a resolution.

#### **Questions:**

**TS:** From the report provided is it correct that Devon, Cornwall and Somerset all have 1 band?

**SG:** Yes, they have a baseline which will cover most children. Requests are then made for additional funds if there is an enhanced risk assessment or due to educational needs. They are not descriptor set and they do not part pay if the student is on a part time timetable. Whilst the DFE suggest monthly retainer to be regularly reconciled but cannot give a direction as to how this is to be best managed.

SG advised the Board that she too had subsequently met with Judith Harwood, who felt that the LA and ACE had always had a good relationship and whether this could be repaired. The communication issues had been raised.

A meeting had also taken place with Isabelle Morgan regarding the process due to the difference in the descriptors/bandings which has led to a lack of systems to work to.

**Questions:**

**PM:** How are the bandings set? Is there a national framework?

**SG:** No it is set by each LA.

TS maintained that a standard banding would not be appropriate for either party.

**SB:** How do ACE Schools Plymouth Primary bandings compare to Courtlands?

**SG:** New banding have led to full cost recovery rather than £650 per term or SEND if PEX. This has required the structure of Primary to be reviewed as where staff are required to be 1:1 with students currently, this is having a knock on affect to the lower need children who are imitating the behaviour. There is currently a blockage in the transition model.

TS summarised the Trust's position as follows:

Following consideration by the Trust, we do acknowledge that some good progress has been made and we are appreciative of that, however, we do not currently feel that we are in a position to accept the bandings and descriptors as proposed. We have therefore directed Sarah Gillett and Paul Turner to meet with Plymouth City Council to discuss the bandings and work on an exemplar for Primary to present to the Board within the next month for further deliberation in an attempt to produce a model which will be both financially and ethically viable for all parties involved.

PT distributed the Terms of Business which the Trustees will review and feedback on once a satisfactory conclusion has been drawn to the above.

8. **Financial Procedure Manual**

PT presented the Finance Procedure Manual to the Board for acceptance as identified in the recent audit and in preparation for the internal audit.

PT advised that the manual would be further scrutinised and evolve during the internal audit process.

**The Board accepted the Financial Procedure Manual.**

9. **Policy Review June 2017.**

All MAT policies are due to be reviewed by June 2017. TS will review all policies himself but requested each Board member receive a number of the policies (pertaining to their area of expertise where possible) to review and feedback on allowing for a double checking of the policies.

**Action 4:** The Clerk will distribute electronic copies of the existing policies to each member of the Board (except to AB as per item 1) to review prior to the next meeting.

PM enquired as to whether the policies should also be reviewed by ACE Schools Plymouth LGB to which SG confirmed they should.

10. **CEO Update.**

SG distributed copies of the brand identity for Courtlands and ACE MAT as created by LGF Marketing.

**The Board accepted both Brands and agreed the use of them with immediate effect.**

SG & PT had met with the Children Home providers in Bournemouth. Feedback from the RSC was supportive and a meeting had been scheduled with solicitors to obtain legal advice on how a service could be set up to support them. SG will update as and when additional advice is given.

**Questions:**

**PM:** Could the costings change?

**SG:** Yes, the costings can be negotiated as per Cornwall/Devon LA.

**SB:** Would this be a new service?

**SG:** Due to the locality and this being a partnership with a profit making organisation, this would be set up as a Trading Company. The Exeter and Cornwall provisions are currently under ACE Schools Plymouth with a view to split these in the future.

11. **LGB Reports**

The Board received both reports. SB advised the Courtlands LGB met once a term so this monthly report had been drafted between herself and Lee Earnshaw. TS requested that this was detailed as an interim report and the date of the previous Board meeting was included.

**The Board acknowledged receipts of both reports.**

12. AOB.

*(Items should be generally lodged with the clerk at least **48 hours before** the meeting).*

**The Board accepted the proposed meetings dates for 2017/2018.**

TS suggested that the June meeting was to be a shorter meeting followed by a meal. The Board agreed for this to be booked.

13. Reserved Business

## Actions Arising:

**Action 1:** PM & SB IT issues to be reported to Karen Felix.

**Action 2:** PT or one of his finance team will attend every other Courtlands LGB meeting to field any questions.

**Action 3:** SB and PT will arrange to meet in the next few weeks to ensure SB is clear on the finance reporting.

**Action 4:** The Clerk will distribute electronic copies of the existing policies to each member of the Board (except to AB as per item 1) to review prior to the next meeting.

## Pending Items:

Item	Date Added (meeting date)	Review Date
Terms of Office – length of service	15 June 2016	June 2017
Policy review	June 2016	By June 2017
Trustees meeting dates	July 2016	November 2016
Trustee Work plan	October 2016	

## Dates of Future Meetings:

Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2017- 18.00-20.00  
Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2017- 18.00-20.00

## Board of Trustees:

Dr Tim Searle	<a href="mailto:tim.searle@aceschools.net">tim.searle@aceschools.net</a>	Chair
Mrs Sarah Gillett	<a href="mailto:sarah.gillett@aceschools.net">sarah.gillett@aceschools.net</a>	CEO & Head Teacher – ACE Schools Plymouth, ACE MAT
Mr Peter McDonnell	<a href="mailto:peter.mcdonnell@acemat.uk">peter.mcdonnell@acemat.uk</a>	Vice Chair
Mr Alastair Wright	<a href="mailto:alastair.wright@acemat.uk">alastair.wright@acemat.uk</a>	Vice Chair Designate
Mrs Annette Benny	<a href="mailto:annette.benny@acemat.uk">annette.benny@acemat.uk</a>	Trustee
Mrs Joan Watkins	<a href="mailto:joan.watkins@acemat.uk">joan.watkins@acemat.uk</a>	Trustee & Chair of Governors – ACE Schools Plymouth, ACE MAT
Mrs Sue Bickle	<a href="mailto:sue.bickle@acemat.uk">sue.bickle@acemat.uk</a>	Trustee & Chair of Governors- Courtlands, ACE MAT