

Board of Trustees Minutes

Date Of Meeting	Wednesday 19 April 2017
Venue	ACE Schools, Bretonside Training Room
Time	18:00 – 20:00

Attendance:

Trustees

Dr Tim Searle
Mr Peter McDonnell
Mrs Sarah Gillett

tim.searle@acemat.uk
peter.mcdonnell@acemat.uk
sarah.gillett@aceschools.net

Mr Alastair Wright
Mrs Joan Watkins
Plymouth
Mrs Sue Bickle

alastair.wright@acemat.uk
joan.watkins@acemat.uk
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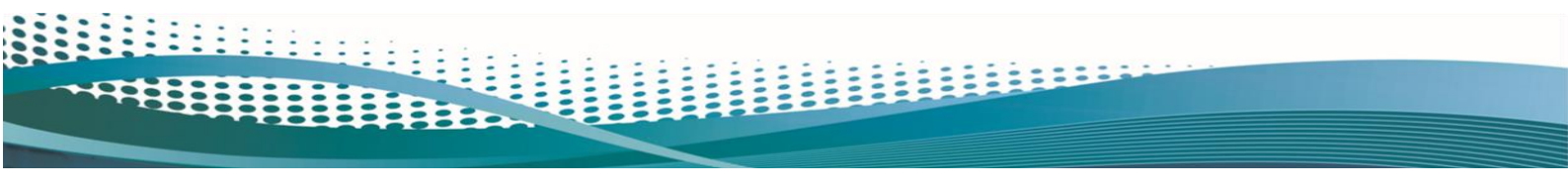
Chair
Vice Chair
CEO & Head Teacher ACE Schools
Plymouth
Vice Chair Designate
Trustee & Chair of Governors ACE Schools
Trustee & Chair of Governors Courtlands

Present

Mr Paul Turner
Mrs Cheryl Reuben

paul.turner@aceschools.net
cheryl.reuben@aceschools.net

CFO
Clerk



1. **Chairman's introduction**
The Chair welcomed the Board and enquired as to whether the Schools within the MAT had returned to the same level of pace as the previous term had ended? SG confirmed that it had but everything was going well at both ACE Schools Plymouth and Courtlands.
2. **Apologies.**
Annette Benny
Accepted.
3. **Verbal declarations of interest.**
None
4. **Approve minutes of the previous meeting**
Approved
5. **Matters & Actions arising from previous meeting**
Actions brought forward:
Action 1: Decision to be made on IOD membership.
The Board agreed that TS as Chair would be registered as a Member of IOD on behalf of ACE Schools MAT and this would be reviewed in 12 months time.

Action 2: All ICT Acceptable Use Policies to be signed and returned.
Received from TS, PM & AW. Awaiting AB & JW

Actions arising:
Action 1: PT to bring structure of ACE Family to the next meeting.
The Board agreed that due to the 2 week Easter Holiday between the March & April meeting, this action would be deferred until the May meeting.

Action 2: SG will feedback to the Board following her meetings with Schools Company in Devon and the RSC at the next meeting.
SG met with Schools Company at their request and under the directive of the DFE. Schools Company consist of 4 bases, each registered with separate reference numbers. They are overdue an Ofsted inspection but currently have 2 sites categorised as Good and 2 as Requiring Improvement, one of which is the largest site in Exeter. Each Base has its own Head Teacher who are not cohesive. The bases are high funding as Devon local Authority matches base funding. The Schools Company Head Office is in London which requires fortnightly meetings in London with the Executive Head. SG advised that any input from ACE School MAT would need to be referred to the Trust and also the DFE.
Questions:
JW: Is it likely that Schools Company could withdraw from these 4 Schools?
SG: Potentially as they are far removed from the main hub of Schools Company sites around London but there has been no discussion around this.
TS: Have you fulfilled what was requested of you by the DFE?
SG: Yes, I have reported my comments back to them and are awaiting their further directive.
PM: What was the capacity of your role for this visit?
SG: As CEO of ACE Schools MAT.

The Board agreed that SG had fulfilled her obligation as directed by the DFE but that if any additional time or input was required, this would be referred to the Board prior to being accepted.
6. **Update from the Head of Finance**
PT summarised the content of the finance reports for ACE Schools Plymouth.

Following the update on the income from PCC, PT updated the Board on the meeting which had occurred with PCC. PT praised the work of Joanne Warn in the ACE Finance Department, having repeatedly revised and submitted information requested by PCC and tracking the information shared. The final amount of underpaid SEN funding totals £94k. The PCC position is that the SEN funding for EHCP students as paid at 01/04/2016 has been revised and allocated a lower banding despite a higher banding having previously been allocated and paid. If the new bandings are upheld, this would total a deficit of £83K.

Questions:

JW: What happened following the Chair's emails to PCC?

TS: A reply was received but it was a 'legal' response. They offered to meet with me on 4th May 2017 which I have accepted.

PT: It appears that the meeting with PCC today was driven by letter from TS.

TS: What is the next course of action?

SG: Schools Forum have looked at all the Bandings in the high need block. They agreed that no prices of banding in SEN for Mainstream or Special Schools would change however, they proposed a reduction of £150k in funding which ACE would receive. I have voiced my objection to this and requested that this objection was minuted. This was referred to the EFA who informally advised they felt this decision was unfair and understood that it is a legacy decision and not directed at ACE specifically. A document is to be drafted detailing the impact of the cuts and this will be reviewed in tomorrow meeting. My position will be that any items raised will need to be referred back to trustees for their consideration the EFA will be advised of changes to the funding agreement.

JW: How do we involve the EFA?

SG: They are aware of the ongoing situation on an informal basis but if the issue looks as if it is going to be detrimental to the Trust, the Board are duty bound to inform EFA.

TS: SG will advise if/when she feels this is necessary.

PT: The concerns have been logged with EFA from the start however, if involved, the EFA will act impartially in respect of both parties.

PM: Can they agree to a reduced cost?

SG: Yes but this does have to be accepted by the Trust and consideration given to the impact of the offer we are able to provide at that cost.

PM: Are there any guidelines on e.g. a student with a specific need must receive x,y and z?

SG: The guidelines are that the offer must be efficient, cater for social, emotional and educational needs. The provider must be OFSTED registered.

SG will update the Board following the meeting scheduled for the following day.

The Board accepted the finance reports for ACE Schools Plymouth.

PT summarised the finance reports for Courtlands.

Questions:

SB: Was the additional £5k applied for through small schools funding as Courtlands has less than 100 students?

PT: Not that I am aware of however, the reports were drafted during the Easter holidays and are yet to be confirmed by Lee/Debbie.

The Board accepted the finance reports for Courtlands.

7. **Update from Remuneration Committee on ACE Schools Plymouth SLT restructure.**

The interview panels were confirmed as below:

(i) Interview panels:

ACE MAT Roles 11th-13th May 2017

Sarah Gillett, Tim Searle, Peter McDonnell, Sarah Gornall (11th & 12th only).

ACE School Roles 15th-17th May 2017

Sarah Gillett, Paul Turner, Joan Watkins, Peter McDonnell.

SG advised that there had been two consultation meetings and a further two were scheduled. A FAQ sheet has been created with all the questions (anonymised) and answered so all staff involved have received the same information. A Union rep from Unison attended one of the consultation meetings and was very complimentary of the process. Two members of the current SLT have requested voluntary redundancy. Trevor Ward's went on garden leave from 31st March 2017. Alison Lamond will commence her garden leave from Friday 28th April 2017. Both will remain employed with ACE until 31st August 2017. A meeting took place with 5 of the key leaders at Bretonside who have absorbed tasks which Trevor had responsibility for. With Alison's garden leave starting later, more time has been given for operational planning.

Questions:

JW: When will the roles be advertised and sifting taking place?

SG: The dates are given in the Business Plan timeline which has been provided to all staff within the MAT. When the expressions of interest are received the first sift will take place against the selection criteria. Those which meet the criteria will be invited to the interview panel.

(ii) Clarification of appointed Safeguarding Lead under new SLT structure

The Board acknowledged that the role of Safeguarding Lead was contained within the job role specification for the proposed Deputy Head position.

8. ACE PR update including a question from JW

Question from JW: What is the plan pertaining to improving the perception of ACE Schools Plymouth within the community? The ACE Schools Plymouth LGB feel that the current perception is a barrier and that the success of the education being provided is the best tool for improving perception and PR

SG: The Trust have appointed LGF to undertake the marketing and PR on behalf of the Trust. They have to date, been working on capturing the essence of ACE Schools Plymouth and Courtlands. LGF have been tasked with working on the Trust identity and assigning value across the Trust. However, this does take time. LGF will be compiling and issuing email newsletters, parent newsletters. They have also already countered an article which appeared without our prior knowledge regarding elective home education and named ACE as overseeing EHE. LGF have also looked at the brand identity of both the Trust and the ACE Schools Plymouth, will be creating a video for use on the website, creating a parent folder, products and services literature, managing Trust social media, creating the trust Report, publicising in local press as well as other education focused media such as the Primary News.

Questions:

JW: Is there anything within the plan to work with other schools across the City?

SG: Not specifically. The brief is to raise the profile of the Trust. The Schools we work with know and respect the work ACE Schools Plymouth undertakes. Local schools will receive email newsletters, copies of Trust reports etc, but no additional work is required in increasing the recognition of our specialism or professionalism.

TS: The marketing strategy plan was circulated in January 2017.

9. CEO Update

SG Updated the board on the outcome of the free school application for Palmerston Forts. Only two SEN school applications were granted, neither of which were ACE. The indication was that there had been a change in the number of schools which PCC wanted to commission. The general feedback received was that there was nothing wrong with the application itself and we have been advised that a further application at a later date would be considered. The consideration now is whether to reapply for the 2019 wave or apply for an AP free school in Cornwall specialising in ASC.

Questions:

SB: As there was a need identified for high functioning ASC students within Plymouth, is there scope to offer a provision for this group?

SG: Yes, consideration is to be given to offer this at a service level rather than a school.

SG advised the Board of a meeting she had attended regarding providing education at a number of children's homes in Bournemouth. Initially, the meeting was to discussing whether ACE Schools MAT could assist in providing education service to two new homes they were opening in Ivybridge but the conversation led to the seven homes in Dorset. The organisation concerned are a profit making business but SG's research shows that they are ethical in their approach. SG is looking at how the Trust may be able to assist, potentially by offering an educational service under a separate holding company or by setting up an independent school. This enquiry is currently with the DFE and awaiting their response.

SG advised the Board that ACE Schools Plymouth participated in the Raspberry Pi competition at Cambridge University. ACE came 7th out of 22 Schools. The team have challenged TS as Chair of the Trust to a 'Robot Wars' which he has accepted.

10. LGB Reports
The LGB reports for ACE Schools Plymouth and Courtlands were received and acknowledged. TS requested that the reports were written in a 'new headline style' followed by any questions.

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

It was requested by the Chair that any matters which could be considered to have a political leaning were referred to either the Chair or CEO before be proceeded with.

PT advised the Board that there was to be an internal audit at the end of the summer term. This would need to be signed off by the Board. **Action 4:** TS requested that this was brought to the May meeting where the annual review of the policies would also be discussed.

12. Reserved Business

Actions Arising:

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

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

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

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

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 17 th May 2017-	18.00-20.00
Wednesday 21 st June 2017-	18.00-20.00
Wednesday 19 th July 2017-	18.00-20.00

Board of Trustees:

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