



Norton College

11-19 School & Sixth Form Centre

Evolution Schools Learning Trust

Meeting of the Trust Board

Wednesday 22nd September 2021 at 6.30pm at the school

Present:	Ms Jill Donaldson Hodges (Chair)	Mr Sam Moore
	Mrs Kelly Dunn	Mr Craig Shepherdson (<i>by video link – until 8.50pm</i>)
	Mr Luke Ives	Mrs Catriona Stewart
	Mrs Caitlin Mackinder	Mrs Karron Young
 In attendance:	Mr Tim Johnson (Headteacher)	
	Mrs Caroline Edwards (Deputy Headteacher) (<i>until 8pm</i>)	
	Mrs Barbara Kybett (Governance Advisor - Clerk)	

1.	Welcome, apologies for absence and consents	ACTION				
	<p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, with a particular welcome to Mrs Edwards who had joined the school as Deputy Headteacher on 1st September. Round the table introductions were made.</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received, with consent, from Mrs Robinson.</p>					
2.	<p>Declarations of Interest (<i>related to this agenda</i>)</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p> <p>Trustees were reminded to return their completed business interest forms to the Clerk.</p>					
3.	<p>Minutes of the last meeting of the Trust Board held on 15th July 2021</p> <p>Previously distributed.</p> <p>Resolved:</p> <p>Trustees considered the minutes of the last Trust Board meeting of 15th July 2021 and agreed that they were a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p>					
4.	<p>Action plan and matters arising</p> <p>Previously distributed.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; margin-top: 10px;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 5%;">Action</th> <th style="width: 70%;">Status</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1. Determine whether there are further delegations which could usefully be added to the FAR Committee's terms of reference</td> <td>Completed</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Action	Status	1. Determine whether there are further delegations which could usefully be added to the FAR Committee's terms of reference	Completed	
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1. Determine whether there are further delegations which could usefully be added to the FAR Committee's terms of reference	Completed					

2.	Consider strengthening the Trustees' Code of Conduct to reflect duties of trustees outlined in Ofsted inspection framework and Governance Handbook	Carried forward	
3.	Return signed disqualifications and declarations form to the Clerk	Completed	
4.	Draft message of thanks to staff on behalf of trustees and progress ideas for gesture of appreciation	Completed	
<p>With reference to Action Point 2, the Chair commented that, in revising the Code of Conduct, she would consider adding a reference to trustees' safeguarding duties.</p> <p>Trustees noted the Rolling Action Plan and undertook to follow up incomplete actions in committee meetings, as appropriate.</p>			
5.	<p>Correspondence received</p> <p>The Chair reported that she continued to receive regular updates from the ESFA.</p> <p>The Headteacher reported that he had been asked to pass on a letter to the Board from a parent regarding the vaccination of students against COVID-19, which he duly did. In response to a question, he advised that schools had received adequate guidance from the DfE regarding their response to correspondence relating to the vaccination programme.</p>		
6.	<p>Headteacher's Report Previously distributed.</p> <p>The Headteacher presented his report. He began by highlighting the significant rise in COVID-19 cases, with over 70 confirmed or pending cases since the beginning of term. The school had reverted to normal routines, in line with DfE guidance and had been advised that none of the outbreaks were large enough to warrant the implementation of an outbreak management plan.</p> <p>The Chair thanked trustees for sending questions in advance of the meeting, which had helped the SLT to prepare. It was agreed that questions proposed in advance should be shared with all trustees, the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher for information.</p> <p>A trustee referred to the relatively high proportion of SEN students receiving exclusions and asked whether the reasons behind this data had been investigated, and if so were there any trends which had been identified. She also queried the attendance rate of SEN students, and the higher proportion of these students with lower attendance. The Deputy Headteacher responded that one of her priorities was to investigate exclusion and attendance of SEN students. She noted that the percentages were still better than the national average in both cases but the actual numbers were nevertheless a cause for concern. She advised however that there no specific trends in either exclusion or attendance of SEN students, and the needs of the students involved were mixed. She would spend time reviewing the support in place for SEN students, to ensure as far as possible that students did not reach exclusion thresholds. She was able to report, however, that SEN students were not being sanctioned with multiple exclusions. The Headteacher added that the</p>		

re-admission process for excluded students had been revised to mitigate the risk of repeat exclusions. He confirmed that the number of SEN students excluded was lower than the national average but the aim was to lower it further still. He advised that teachers' performance management this year included a focus on disadvantaged, SEN and higher attaining students as part of whole school improvement.

A trustee commented that, for the data on SEN students, it would be very useful to see a percentage or a number on roll per year group; national averages would also be useful as this information could help give a perspective on why numbers of students with SEN were so much lower in Years 10 and 11.

A trustee remarked that it was very positive to have secured the services of a school counsellor and asked how this provision was being accessed. The Headteacher explained that students were prioritised through a referral system managed by the DSL, Mrs Barber, but the demand exceeded the time available. The Deputy Headteacher added that careers counselling was also a helpful intervention for disengaged students, in terms of raising their aspirations.

A trustee noted that staff were working hard to address issues around harmful sexual behaviour and questioned whether the school was working in partnership with other schools or, if not, what was the source of the internal expertise. The Deputy Headteacher explained that the school had not worked with other schools but staff were undertaking relevant training; she provided some examples. Students were also being taught about the subject through their personal development programme. The Headteacher advised that the school was considering what might be managed differently but staff must assume that peer on peer abuse was taking place in school, even if reporting was low. Ofsted inspectors would look to speak to single sex groups about the issue and the DSL would take a similar approach and would use these group sessions to explore the issue. The Deputy Headteacher advised that students could report peer on peer abuse through the Insight app.

Mrs Dunn referred to a charitable organisation which worked with students on managing their emotions. She agreed to pass on the details to the SLT.

Action: Mrs Dunn to pass on relevant details to the Deputy Headteacher of the charitable organisation providing support to students on managing their emotions.

The Chair asked for an update on any holistic approach to Pupil Premium (PP) students, given that there were concerns around the progress and exclusion rates of PP students. The Headteacher responded that the summer term monitoring cycle had been used to identify specific strategies which were successful with PP students and staff would then build them into their performance management targets. Closing the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students would be a top priority for the school this year. For example, strategies to improve attendance would be focussed on a specific group of disadvantaged students.

The Deputy Headteacher expanded on the work being done to close the gap and improve attendance, particularly in terms of the rewards system now in place. She explained that changing the mindset of staff was key: it was essential that staff were willing to try to understand individual students' backgrounds and that they implemented the Behaviour Policy correctly and consistently. The Headteacher added that the school had also engaged in the National Tutoring Programme

KD

which would be funded by the COVID catch up grant: disadvantaged students would be a priority group for this extra support. Mrs Young agreed to share a helpful document she had seen which set out a number of successful strategies for disadvantaged students.

Action: share document outlining successful strategies for disadvantaged students with SLT.

Mr Shepherd referred to his Pupil Premium link visit which took place at the end of the summer term, when he had queried whether there was a correlation between SEN and PP students, for example, in terms of geographical or other trends. This information was not available at the time but would be helpful to identify.

A trustee questioned whether Teacher Assessed Grades from the summer could be used as evidence of progress made to raise the attainment of PP students. The Headteacher responded that, although PP attainment had improved, so had the attainment of non-disadvantaged students so there was still a gap to be closed. He commented that performance management targets would drive school improvement by increasing the personal responsibility and accountability of staff for the outcomes of PP students.

In response to a question as to whether there would be different strategies for each sub-group of PP students, the Headteacher agreed that a variety of strategies would be used depending on the sub-group and some might not need additional strategies to succeed.

A trustee noted that English was the core subject in greatest need of improvement, and was pleased that a new Head of English had been appointed who was implementing new curriculum plans. She queried how trustees would evaluate the impact of these changes. The Headteacher advised that he would report back to the Board on the success of these measures, with evidence of the impact reported through the new assessment system at KS3 and GCSE results at KS4. He would invite the Head of English to present to trustees at a future meeting. Trustees could triangulate further through visits to school and speaking with students. It was noted that trustees held the SLT to account in part through link trustee visits used to evidence the impact of curriculum.

Agenda: presentation from Head of English on new curriculum.

A trustee referred to the student numbers detailed in the Headteacher's report and commented that other local schools were distributing marketing material in the area. The Headteacher responded that, since his arrival, the school's profile in the local area had been significantly raised and there had been a number of visits by the SLT to local primary schools. In terms of current numbers, Year 7 was almost full and Year 8 was full: the larger year groups were lower down the school which was positive. Sixth Form numbers were disappointing, however, and would be discussed further at the Education and Standards Committee meeting. The Chair advised that the Head of Sixth Form had produced a five year plan which would be presented to the Education and Standards Committee initially and then to the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee for scrutiny before being agreed by the Trust Board.

Agendas – Committees and Trust Board – five year strategy for the Sixth Form.

A trustee cautioned that the current upturn in student numbers might not be sustainable as many travelled from coastal areas and the school was not recruiting wholly successfully from its

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	<p>feeder primary schools. Further qualitative and quantitative data would be needed to fully understand the issues. The Headteacher agreed that the number of students travelling in from the coast was an issue but argued that significant steps were being made in ensuring that the school benefited from admitting as many students from its catchment area as possible. There was some further discussion and trustees agreed that further analysis of the data would be needed before conclusions could be drawn, and action taken.</p> <p>The Chair referred to the particular areas of significant improvement during 2020-21 listed in the Headteacher’s report and queried how trustees would be able to evidence this improvement. It was suggested that the evidence of these improvements had been captured in the minutes of governing body discussions last year and trustees could meet informally to ensure that they were familiar with the impact of these improvements. Improvements would also be able to seen through the SEF 21-22</p> <p>Action: Chair to read through previous sets of minutes and Headteacher’s reports to highlight improvements.</p> <p>Trustees thanked the Headteacher for his report.</p>	JDH
7.	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>This had been covered in the Headteacher’s report. The Headteacher advised that he would complete a more granular analysis of CPOMS with the Deputy Headteacher and the DSL which would give them a better sense of the key target areas for safeguarding.</p>	
8.	<p>Update on RAP Priorities</p> <p>Trustees noted the key emerging priorities outlined in the Headteacher’s report. The Headteacher highlighted that the majority of the priorities were related to the Quality of Education judgement of the Ofsted framework. There was now a new, stronger SLT structure in place, with a new Deputy Headteacher and two new Assistant Headteachers and a strengthened subject leadership team, which would drive school improvement. The Headteacher added that behaviour and attitudes sat alongside the Quality of Education - attendance was the key priority. These priorities would obviously be detailed in the next RAP which was underway but trustees needed to approve these initially as part of their strategic role.</p> <p>Resolved: Trustees unanimously approved the key priorities.</p>	
9.	<p>Ofsted Preparation Previously distributed.</p> <p>Trustees noted the Ofsted Inspection Checklist which had been previously distributed. The Chair referred to page 5 of the document and highlighted the role of trustees and the evidence of their contribution to leadership and management which would be scrutinised by the inspectors.</p> <p>The Headteacher offered some thoughts on the likelihood and type of Ofsted inspection which the school might undergo this year and trustees spent time discussing how they would prepare. The</p>	

	<p>Chair advised that she had already begun to prepare an electronic folder of relevant documents. The Headteacher agreed to send a list of sample Ofsted questions to trustees.</p> <p>Action: the Headteacher to send a list of sample Ofsted questions to trustees.</p> <p>The Chair encouraged trustees to attend the training course “Being Ofsted Ready” offered through the CYC Governance Service training programme. She underlined the importance of the external review of governance which the Board had undertaken last year and noted that the Governance Improvement Plan would act as evidence of the impact of the review.</p>	HT
*13.	<p>Policy Review</p> <p>Behaviour Policy Previously distributed. <i>It was agreed that this item would be taken next.</i></p> <p>Trustees received the updated Behaviour Policy.</p> <p>A trustee asked how the implementation and monitoring of the policy would be carried out, and how new staff, particularly Early Career Teachers (ECTs), would be trained and supported in its implementation. The Deputy Headteacher reported that she had updated staff on the Behaviour Policy during the September inset day. The Headteacher added that the ECTs had additional time out of class and were supported by mentors – behaviour management would be covered as part of their induction, which would be overseen by Mrs Waines, Assistant Headteacher. The SLT were taking opportunities to visit classrooms, particularly those of new staff and ECTs.</p> <p>A trustee asked if the Behaviour Policy adequately took into account pressure points in the school day. The Headteacher responded that unstructured time was a pressure point for poorer behaviour but staggered break and lunchtimes had been retained to mitigate this risk. The recruitment of midday assistants would also help to manage behaviour during breaktimes. The Headteacher noted that movement around school was a pressure point, due to the narrowness of corridors, which was difficult to mitigate. However, this was being monitored and the DSL was investigating which areas of the school were causing students to feel less safe.</p> <p>A trustee queried whether the SLT was confident that the structure of the behaviour system was working in practice. The Deputy Headteacher replied that the team was aware of areas where the policy was more challenging to implement.</p> <p>Trustees agreed that the emphasis in the policy on keeping students in the classroom was very positive and marked a change of culture in the school. The Headteacher commented that the policy was too long currently and a more concise version would be drafted this year by the Deputy Headteacher.</p> <p>Resolved: Trustees approved the Behaviour Policy, given that it was being reviewed and this would take account of minor typographical errors.</p> <p>Trustees thanked the Deputy Headteacher and she left the meeting at 8pm.</p>	

10.	<p>Chair's Report</p> <p><u>Strategic Direction of the Trust</u> <i>The following discussion is recorded as a confidential minute.</i></p> <p><u>Update on Revised Memorandum of Association</u></p> <p>The Chair advised that the SBM was in contact with NYCC regarding the legal aspects of revising the Memorandum of Association.</p>	
11.	<p>Governance</p> <p><u>11.1 Scheme of Delegation</u> Previously distributed.</p> <p>The Chair noted that the Scheme of Delegation was in two parts and had been written originally when the school hoped to be part of a larger academy trust. She had received input from the Clerk in revising the Scheme to ensure that it was now a cohesive document which set out key roles and responsibilities. The Chair invited comments on Appendix 1.</p> <p>Mr Ives commented that the Scheme should show at what level decisions were made, not necessarily who carried out the action. It was also not necessary to know who a task had been delegated to, only who was responsible. This was in line with the NGA model Scheme of Delegation where the focus was at what level the decision was made and who would be advising on the decision. Mr Ives added that the role of committees needed more clarity.</p> <p>Resolved Trustees agreed to approve the Scheme of Delegation subject to the Chair, Mr Ives and the Clerk reviewing Appendix 1 alongside the NGA model.</p> <p>Action: the Chair, Mr Ives and the Clerk to work together to review and improve Appendix 1 of the Scheme of Delegation.</p> <p>Agenda: revised Appendix 1 of the Scheme of Delegation.</p> <p><u>11.2 Annual Meeting Schedule</u> Previously distributed.</p> <p>Resolved: Trustees approved the Annual Meeting Schedule.</p> <p><u>11.3 Confirm SLT link trustees and other trustee responsibilities</u></p> <p>Resolved: Trustees agreed the following link trustee roles and responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding – Mrs Robinson • Leadership and Management – Ms Donaldson Hodges • Quality of Education – Mrs Young 	<p>JDH/LI/Clerk</p> <p>Agenda</p>

- Pupil Premium – Mrs Mackinder and Mr Shepherdson
- SEND – Mrs Mackinder
- Behaviour and Attitudes – Mrs Dunn
- Personal Development – Mr Moore
- Sixth Form – Mrs Stewart
- Health and Safety - Mr Ives
- Staff Wellbeing – Mrs Stewart
- Early Career Teachers – Mrs Young
- Whistleblowing – Ms Donaldson Hodges

11.4 Trustee visit schedule and link visit protocols

Previously distributed.

The Chair referred to the trustee link visit schedule and advised that she had attempted to schedule visits to dovetail with the monitoring cycle which she had been sent by Mr Stones, Assistant Headteacher. She recommended that trustees undertake an initial link visit in the second half of the autumn term and a more in depth visit later in the academic year to review the impact of the RAP. **A trustee asked if it was appropriate to have so many link visits in one half term.** The Headteacher was of the view that this would not be an issue given that a number of different school staff were involved.

Action: the Headteacher agreed to notify trustees the details of their link member of staff.

HT

It was noted that some link trustees did not sit on the Committee into which their visit reports would naturally feed.

Action: the Chair agreed to give further consideration to the disconnect between some link roles and committee membership.

JDH

11.5 Easy Access Documents

The Chair advised that she had set up an area of Microsoft Teams for trustees where important documents would be held.

11.6 Governance Improvement Plan

Previously distributed.

The Chair reported that she had RAG rated the governance improvement plan and the next step would be to begin to review the impact of the actions taken at the next meeting.

Agenda: Governance improvement plan – impact of actions

Agenda

The Chair also advised that Kate Lounds, who had conducted the external review of governance, would undertake a return visit before Christmas to review progress made on the governance improvement plan.

11.7 Membership of Headteacher's Performance Management and Pay Committee

Resolved:

Trustees appointed Mrs Donaldson Hodges, Mrs Dunn and Mrs Young to the Headteacher's Performance Management Committee.

	<p>Trustees appointed Mr Ives, Mrs Mackinder and Mr Moore to the Pay Committee.</p> <p>Action: the Clerk agreed to investigate an alternative date for the Pay Committee.</p> <p><u>11.8 Training Update</u> Previously distributed.</p> <p>Trustees were asked to consider what training would be relevant to their area of responsibility.</p>	<p><i>Clerk</i></p>
<p>12.</p>	<p>Link Visit Reports Previously distributed.</p> <p><u>Safeguarding – Mrs Robinson</u></p> <p>The Chair reported that Mrs Robinson had emphasised that this had been an exploratory meeting and that she was very happy to receive comments or questions on her report. She planned to visit the school on a termly basis. The Chair would explore links with other Trusts so Mrs Robinson could have contact with another safeguarding link governor or trustee at another school to share best practice.</p> <p>Action: Chair to contact other Trust to make links with safeguarding trustees/governors</p> <p>The Headteacher noted that the safeguarding link trustee will check the Single Central Record on a regular basis as part of these visits.</p> <p><u>Careers – Mr Moore and Mrs Stewart</u></p> <p>A discussion about this link visit report was deferred to the next Board meeting in December so that it could include the follow up visit and so that sufficient quality time could be allocated for the discussion.</p> <p>Agenda: Careers link visit report.</p>	<p><i>JDH</i></p> <p><i>Agenda</i></p>
<p>13.</p>	<p>Policy Review</p> <p><u>Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy</u> Previously distributed.</p> <p>The Chair noted that this was a comprehensive policy. She queried whether trustees’ duties in relation to safeguarding should be specifically mentioned. It was agreed that as trustees were school leaders, this was already captured in the document.</p> <p><i>(Mr Shepherdson left the meeting at 8.50pm)</i></p> <p>Resolved: Trustees unanimously approved the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy subject to some minor typographical amendments.</p>	

	<p><u>Behaviour Policy</u> Covered above.</p> <p>Resolved: Trustees approved Mrs Edwards, Deputy Headteacher, as the designated teacher for looked after and previously looked after children.</p>	
14.	<p>Determination of matters to be regarded as confidential</p> <p>A discussion under Item 9 was recorded as a confidential minute.</p>	
15.	<p>Any other business</p> <p>The Chair extended an invite to trustees to attend the school's Open Evening which was scheduled to take place the following week.</p> <p>The Chair asked all trustees to complete their internet safety training by Friday 22nd October.</p> <p>Action: all trustees to complete internet safety training by Friday 22nd October 2021.</p> <p>Trustees agreed that they were happy to be included in an informal social media group, which would be used to prompt them to log in to their school email when urgent communications had been sent.</p> <p>Action: the Chair to check with the IT Manager about ways forward for the double authentication changes</p>	<p><i>All trustees</i></p> <p><i>JDH</i></p>
16.	<p>Dates and times of future meetings – all at 6.30pm</p> <p>Previously distributed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wednesday 15th December 2021 (AGM) – trustees were asked to note the change of date • Wednesday 6th April 2022 • Wednesday 13th July 2022 <p>Trustees noted the revised meeting dates for the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee – all at 6.30pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wednesday 20th October 2021 (via Teams) • Wednesday 17th November 2021 • Wednesday 9th February 2022 • Monday 25th April (via Teams) • Thursday 30th June 2022 • Wednesday 20th July 2022 (via Teams) 	

Meeting ended at 9.00pm

Signed: Jill Donaldson Hodges

Date: 15th December 2021

Ms Jill Donaldson Hodges (Chair)

ACTION PLAN FROM THE MEETING OF THE ESLT BOARD held on Wednesday 22nd September 2021

To be added to the rolling action plan

Action	Item	Person(s)	Timescale	
1.	Consider strengthening the Code of Conduct to reflect duties of trustees outlined in Ofsted inspection framework and Governance Handbook	3	JDH/Clerk	This academic year
2.	Pass on relevant details to the Deputy Headteacher of the charitable organisation providing support to students on managing their emotions	6	KD	ASAP
3.	Share document outlining successful strategies for disadvantaged students with SLT	6	KY	ASAP
4.	Read through previous sets of minutes and Headteacher's reports to highlight improvements	6	Chair	ASAP
5.	Send a list of sample Ofsted questions to trustees	9	HT	ASAP
6.	Work together to review and improve Appendix 1 of the Scheme of Delegation	11.1	JDH/LI/Clerk	Before next meeting
7.	Notify trustees of the details of their link member of staff	11.4	HT	ASAP
8.	Give further consideration to the disconnect between some link roles and committee membership	11.4	JDH	Before next meeting
9.	Investigate an alternative date for the Pay Committee	11.7	Clerk	ASAP
10.	Contact other Trust to make links with safeguarding trustees/governors	12	JDH	Before next meeting
11.	Complete internet safety training	15	All trustees	22/10/21
12.	Check with the IT Manager about ways forward for the double authentication changes	15	JDH	Before next meeting

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS:

Trust Board

- Presentation from Head of English on new curriculum
- Five year strategy for the Sixth Form
- Scheme of Delegation – Appendix 1
- Governance improvement plan – impact of actions
- Careers link visit report

Education and Standards Committee

- Five year strategy for the Sixth Form
- Governance Action Plan

- Monitoring and review cycle – Mr Stones and Mrs Waines
- Link governor report – Sam Moore/Catriona Stewart (Careers)

Finance, Audit and Risk

- Five year strategy for the Sixth Form
- Governance Action Plan

APPROVED