

**THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**PUBLIC MINUTES**

<b>Date</b>	:	Tuesday, 18 May 2021	
<b>Time</b>	:	16:00	
<b>Venue</b>	:	Virtual via Zoom	
<b>Present</b>	:	Carly Clarke	Trustee
		Clive-Anthony Douglas	Trustees / Chair
		Mohammed Mamun	Trustee
		Nina Panayis	Trustee
		Patricia Regis	Trustee
		John Rolfe	Trustee
		Rosemary Tehrani	Trustee
<b>In attendance</b>	:	Tom Canning OBE	Chief Executive Officer
		Sarah Lack	Deputy CEO
		Steven Lock	Chief Finance and Operating Officer
		Rose Nelson	Finance Specialist
		Emma O'Connor	Headteacher – Tollgate
		Nneoma Onyemachi	Headteacher – Cleves
		Geoff Hadlow	Headteacher - Shaftesbury
		Lance Philpott	Clerk

The Code of Conduct for Trustees requires Trustees to be honest and open with regard to conflicts of interest (either real or perceived). Trustees must not use their position for personal gain in business, political or social relationships. Therefore, a Trustee who has, or may be perceived to have, such a personal interest in a particular matter under consideration should declare that interest, withdraw from all discussions relating to it and take no part in any vote on such matter.

Items marked \* are those in which a majority of Trustees may have an interest because of some shared attribute. When considering these items, Trustees should aim to achieve a balanced view, paying particular attention to the sources of information and advice, and remind themselves of their duties as Trustees and to act in the public interest.

**1. MEETING OPENING**

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1.2 Apologies had been received from Asha Choolhun and Phillip Minns and accepted by the Board.



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1.3 The Clerk noted that the meeting was quorate.

**2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS, PECUNIARY OR OTHERWISE IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

2.1 There were no declarations of interest on any item on the agenda.

**3. CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP LIST**

3.1 No item to report on.

**4. PUBLIC MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING AND ACTIONS ARISING**

4.1 The minutes of the Board Meeting held on Thursday, 1 April 2021 were **AGREED** and **RATIFIED** as a correct record.

4.2 There were no actions arising from the previous minutes.

**5. MAIN BUSINESS**

5.1 Presentations from Shaftesbury, Cleve and Tollgate Headteachers

5.1.1 Shaftesbury

GH presented his verbal report giving the following information.

From the last OFSTED in 2016 we were judged outstanding. In 2020 we carried out a practice inspection where we reached a judgement of overall outstanding.

Considering the new framework, we have identified areas to work on.

Safeguarding – There is a greater focus on attendance data streams identifying persistent absentees and holding parents more to account.

The learning environment – In EYFS and nursery this is exceptional and we can roll this out to the wider school.

The reading curriculum – It needs to be reviewed and built up cumulatively with a progress model to challenge and deepen understanding. We will update the phonics map and we've moved from reading extracts to whole books. We're also investing in core texts and developing shared and guided reading so pupils complete a book per term.

Maths and Science – We are developing the application of Maths to deepen understanding and also developing the quality of learning in science.

Foundation – Learners can recall prior learning, rehearse facts and understanding and also to remember and know.



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Depth of knowledge – This is reached because pupils have excellent learning behaviour. A greater depth of learning should be an overall objective in class.

SEND – We are mapping and assessing personal progress using Edukeep software. A Deputy SENCO has been appointed for succession as the current SENCO is near retirement.

Remote learning – The report evaluation has been good showing that it has been a key strength. There has been high attention to detail with lessons and learners have been thriving.

Live and recorded lessons have all been high quality with a high standard of pedagogy.

During the pandemic the instance of pupils returning work has been good so we have been able to evaluate and assess progress.

Black Lives Matter (BLM) – We have many black staff. BLM is embedded in the curriculum and features in PSHE and cross-curricular lessons. We also work through texts and use posters, debate and competitions to address BLM. EYFS books are based around black characters and authors.

**CAD:** Thanks for the report. Because I like to see things in a grid could you put headlines into your report?

#### 5.1.2 Cleves

Neoma [Headteacher] presented her verbal report, supported by a powerpoint presentation giving the following information.

Our last OFSTED was outstanding. SLT has reviewed what we need to focus on.

Quality of Education – We are providing catch-up for phonics and reading.

Some parents have not been able to access remote learning so packs were sent home. If there is to be further remote learning it will be a focus for next year.

We have successfully used an assessment tracker for online AFL using real time data - with no delay to accessing the information.

NQT and NQT+2 staff who have lost training through the pandemic will be offered more training and buddying.

We are embedding an engagement model into SEND assessment as well as using 'Educater'.



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We aim for all subject leaders to be positive, enthusiastic and positive about their area.

We are providing after school schools to develop knowledge, verbal and non-verbal reasoning. This is useful for parents who are enquiring about grammar school application and need to know how to prepare.

Behaviour and Attitudes – We have judged this 1 across the board except for attendance which is 2. We do have persistent absence due to long term illness/medical reasons so we are looking at how remote learning can help with these pupils.

Personal Development – We have judged this generally a 1.

We continue to develop spoken language, confidence, resilience and independence through events and workshops. We will develop this.

Leadership and Management – We have judged this generally a 1.

Black Lives Matter (BLM) – There is no political agenda in this area. It is not about black lives per se, it is about experiences. We focus on excellence for all through taking opportunities.

**CAD:** Superb work. You are taking the school forward after Sarah.

**TC:** A seamless transition after Sarah. Really well done.

### 5.1.3. Tollgate


EOC presented her verbal report giving the following information.

The last inspection was outstanding, and we are expecting the next one in the next academic year 2021/2022. Thinking about the framework our focus is on the curriculum and we are looking at a skills-based programme. There is momentum with the staff to engage with this approach. The standards attained with books, teaching, and learning and behaviour are high.

After COVID return on 8<sup>th</sup> March teachers have been observed with lessons judged as good or better. In addition we have 2 week book check cycles.

We have a review next week from Sir Robin Boshier (OFSTED) who will carry out a deep dive with Reading, Science and SEND. Heads of subject are working hard across the curriculum.

Children are articulating their learning, particularly the more able. They can talk about how they are progressing. This will take us to the summer break and beyond as a key focus.



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Black Lives Matter (BLM) – Martin Stanley has written a module on Equality which we are implementing at Tollgate. We are using PHSE to embed racism, diversity and equality and displays around school record this work.

Remote learning – This has been a challenge with 90% accessing it. Parents have appreciated the live lessons we have been able to stream towards the end of lockdown. By the end all phonics lessons were live and we had also had 2 to 3 live lessons per week per year group.

If there is another lockdown we could confidently switch to remote learning.

**CAD:** I would advocate getting information on paper so they can be included with the minutes. However, an excellent job.

**PR:** Thanks to the Heads. Can we have sight of the Martin Stanley module?

**EOC:** As soon as it is ready, I'll pass it on to all Trustees.

**ACTION EOC**

TC Thanked all 3 Headteachers for their reports.

## 5.2 CEO's report

TC presented his report to Trustees.

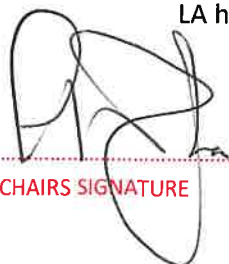
We are working on the catch-up recovery curriculum looking to plug any gaps. We are undertaking lots of assessments and also including lots of curriculum enrichment to try to recover from what has been lost during the pandemic. We have a specific focus on making it fun as well as being rigorous and robust.

We are trying to get back to pre-pandemic attendance figures, but currently 28 families with their children are still stranded overseas. These have been reported to Newham for safeguarding reasons.

With national attendance at 96% we're not quite there yet. Some pupils are still self-isolating which impacts on attendance. We aim to be at national average by the end of term.

CAD and I have been working with a neighbouring Trust on re-brokering their primary school into the Boleyn Trust. SGL and RN are leading on due diligence for this this.

We have been dealing with Newham council who wish to relocate a child with complex learning needs to a Trust school. Currently at a Newham Primary School they are awaiting an autism diagnosis. The recommendation is for the child to stay at a Newham Primary School and the parent has accepted this. However, Newham have objected, overriding the parental preference. The report has been published and the LA has been heavily criticised. Adjudication of this case disagreed with the request to



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move the child. Additionally, Tollgate school had not been contacted neither had the Trust. There does not seem to be any due process followed.

**CAD:** There has been a lack of communication from Newham. We felt Newham were pushing us around. The criticism of them in this matter is scathing.

**TC:** Staff have 26 pupils plus 3 with complex needs in a class. Another such learner would be a health and safety matter. The Head at Tollgate said they did not have the capacity. Newham had overruled the Head. I do not want Newham to be badly thought of but in this instance, they seem to have ignored common sense. The report is not good reading.

**RT:** Is attendance reduced by overseas problems common to other schools?

**TC:** It is reflected across the borough and beyond. It links to countries on the red list.

### 5.3 Management Accounts

RN presented the Management Accounts.

RN started by informing Trustees that the accounts will be on GH after the Chair has signed them off. RN stated that this summary is different to other months and then set out the reasons.

In April there was a surplus of £77256 with a budget surplus of £96315, giving a variance of c£19k. RN explained that the overall financial position has a negative variance as there has been increased spending across the school due to COVID recovery, educational supplies, technology and cleaning and caretaking

The Trust has been prudent and accrued the 2.5% increase in payment to support staff. However this may be reversed. Also some support staff are taking their entitlement to register for the pension scheme. However the forecast does remain positive.

The full year forecast position is a positive variance of £797k. The accounts for April show the full year financial position which Trustees may find useful.

TC asked RN to talk about the Tollgate figures, who then set out the following information.

RN explained that there is a negative variance with Tollgate. She said we are working with the Head at Tollgate to look at efficiency and buying effectively. Also there has been a reduction of £123k in Special Educational funding. If this funding is received a surplus position will be achieved. We are looking at the funding statements to see what can be done.

Staffing costs are down on the budget by £109k but other expenditure is high. RN explained that COVID catch-up is high and while we have received an increase it is not



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included in the budget. In addition we have spent more on building improvements and we have had to deal with a water leak that has increased energy costs. We are £14k over budget on grounds work.

**CAD:** At year end 31<sup>st</sup> August where will Tollgate be?

**RN:** We have been prudent. If the £123k arrives we are in surplus. If not we have a deficit of £24k

**CAD:** What can we do quickly to avoid a deficit?

**RN:** We can work on some of the costs such as professional services, curriculum and teaching costs. We do have some budgets we can use. There isn't much room for budget reductions at Tollgate so we could look at overspend and deal with it centrally. Admin supplies could save £5k.

**TC:** We have never had a deficit budget so we must do what we need to do to avert this.

**CC:** Quick wins are possible. We can look at ways to deal with this.

**TC:** I would like to assure all Trustees that the Executives will not allow any of our schools to go into deficit. RN and SGL are right to be prudent and the scenario is worst case.

**RN:** Absolutely. All schools are part of one group. It is good management that all Heads manage their budget. I'm confident the fix is manageable.

TC concluded this section by thanking RN and SGL for all their work. He then gave an update on the Budget process. Referring to the schools in the Trust he stated that all information and guidance is sent to all schools and budget workshop has been held to work with all Heads and SBMs.

5.4 Delayed until all other items had been addressed. Confidential Note written.

## 6. STANDING ITEMS

6.1 Verbal update from Chair of Audit Committee

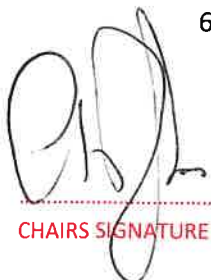
6.1.1 There was nothing to report since the last meeting.

6.2 Verbal report from the Chair of the Standards Committee

6.2.1 There was nothing to report from the last meeting.

6.3 Verbal report form the Chair of the Resources and Remuneration Committee

6.3.1 There was nothing to report from the last meeting.



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- 6.4 Trustee suggestions for future agenda discussions.
- 6.4.1 TC said that it might be nice to hold the next meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> July as a face-to-face meeting and finish with a social event.
- 6.4.2 The CEO suggested a rolling programme inviting two headteachers to each meeting to present on a topic.

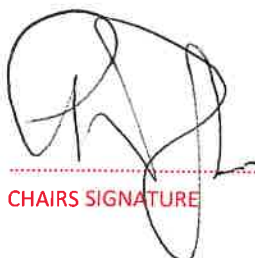
**Trustees approved this as a future agenda item.**

**7. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

- 7.1 CAD stated that he had visited Monega school and found it an insightful experience.
- 7.2 Please see confidential note.

**8. DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING**

- 8.1 The date of the next Board Meeting will be communicated to Trustees.
- 8.2 There being no further business, the Chair thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 17:50.



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