

Academy:	The Aspire Multi- Academy Trust
Meeting title:	Meeting of the Board of Directors
Date and time:	Thursday 16th July 2020 at 6.00pm (started at 6.05 pm)
Location:	Virtual attendance via ZOOM

Membership

‘A’ denotes absence

	Mr K Daniell	KD
	Mr M Skinner (CEO)	MS
	Mr P Golightly (Chair)	PG
	Mrs C Meese	CM
A	Mr M Fielding	MF
	Mr C Anderson	CA
	Mr R Sewell	RS

In attendance

Mrs. S Harrison -Clerk to the Board	Clerk
Mrs H Detheridge – MAT Finance and Business Manager	MFBM/HD
Miss S Maddison -Headteacher at SJS (left at 6.29 pm)	
Mrs. R Jones -Headteacher at KWS (left at 6.29 pm)	
Mrs. K Watson- Headteacher at OTP (left at 6.29 pm)	

Glossary

ABC	Archbishop Cranmer CofE Academy
ABM	Academy Business Manager
BJ	Brown Jacobson (Solicitors)
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
DBE	Diocesan Board of Education
EBSP	East Bridgford St Peter’s CofE Academy
FWC	Finance & Workforce Committee
GPS	Gunthorpe CofE Primary School
HT	Headteacher
KWS	Kirkby Woodhouse Primary School
LA	Local Authority
LGB	Local governing body
MAT	Multi-Academy Trust
MFBM	MAT Finance & Business Manager
RSC	Regional Schools Commissioner
SJS	Sir John Sherbrook Junior School
OTS	Oak Tree Primary school

PG welcomed the HT’s to the meeting and introductions were made.

PG explained that the purpose of inviting the HT’s to the meeting was to facilitate an opportunity for HT’s and Directors to discuss and understand any issues that were presenting as the end of term approached, and to identify any further action that may be needed by the Board in addition to the support provided by MS.

Each HT updated Directors on the challenges specific to their school and community during the Covid-19 crisis and their plans for September reopening, including anticipated obstacles. Challenges discussed included the impact of Covid-19 on staffing, safeguarding, community resources available to support schools, and the anticipated challenge of the normal minor illnesses associated with the autumn term, alongside dealing with Covid-19.

On behalf of Directors PG thanked the HT's, SLT's and all staff for everything they had done over the past 4 months and expressed the sincere gratitude of the Board for their efforts. Directors emphasised that HT's inform MS or Directors if there was any further support schools required from the Board.

BD/20/39 Apologies for absence

Action

Apologies had been received from Mrs. Stevens (HT at ABC) and Mr. Tomlinson (HT at EBSP). No other apologies had been received.

The apologies were accepted.

BD/20/40 Conflicts of interest

There were no declarations of interest, either direct or indirect, for items of business on the agenda.

RS declared that he works for Rock UK, and some of the academies use this service.

BD/20/41 Minutes of the last Board meeting

- **30th April 2020**
- **14th May 2020 (extra-ordinary)**

The minutes of the previous Board meeting held on **30th April 2020**, having been previously circulated were **CONFIRMED** and electronically signed by the chair.

Matters Arising (not otherwise on agenda)

BD/20/25 -CIF bids-There were two ongoing projects at ABC and KWS.

PG asked for an update on progress. HD reported that the works at ABC were almost complete and works at KWS would be completed over the summer; both projects would be completed by the end of August. The first funding extension had been approved however a second application would need to be submitted but this was not an area of concern.

HD

PG asked if the projects would be completed within budget.

HD noted that Ridge (the main contractor) knew that the contracts must be completed within budget.

The minutes of the previous Board meeting held **14th May 2020 (extra-ordinary)** having been previously circulated, were **CONFIRMED** and electronically signed by the chair.

There were no matters arising.

BD/20/42 CEOs report

The CEO spoke to his report which had already been circulated and was available to view on the Hub. He highlighted the headlines of his report and invited questions from the Directors:

The report had a different format due to Covid-19.

70 updates relating to Covid-19 had been previously circulated to Directors since 2nd March.

Imminent Section 5 Inspection of KWS; Ofsted to resume inspections from January 2020.

Ofsted expected to carry out one day visits to some schools in the autumn term to review how they have coped with the Covid-19 pandemic, however this would not be considered on inspection.

The two successful aspects of the complaint to Ofsted were explained and the implications for safeguarding.

PG asked if MS had any idea when the other schools were now likely to have an Ofsted inspection given the delays caused by Covid-19.

MS responded that it was likely that there would be a two term delay, therefore KWS would be likely to have an inspection in the spring term and GPS in the summer term, with ABC and EBSP now delayed until the 2021/22 academic year when OTP would also be due for inspection.

CM questioned if KWS were more likely to receive a one day post Covid-19 Ofsted visit as they were due a section 5 inspection, it was the largest of the MAT's schools and that the headteacher was due for maternity leave. As OTP were sponsored to become an academy would they be less likely to receive a 1 day visit.

MS noted that it was possible that KWS could receive a one day Ofsted visit in the autumn however, as they would definitely have a section 5 inspection in the spring term they may not have an autumn visit also. MS confirmed that OTP were less likely to receive a visit from Ofsted.

CM questioned if MS would be prioritising KWS for support given the pending Ofsted inspection and the staffing situation, along with prioritising OTP.

MS confirmed that KWS would be his first priority in the autumn term as they needed to plan for the deputy headteacher to be acting headteacher at the time of the inspection. MS noted that the SLT at KWS was a large and very capable team and the current headteacher would ensure a very thorough handover.

CA noted that it was thought at the time that the Ofsted inspector had already made her decision before she actually arrived in school to undertake the assessment. Whilst he acknowledged that no further action could be taken, the fact that the complaint had been upheld in two instances indicated poor judgement in these areas. Whilst the school had to accept the report it was important that the staff understood this and the Board supported the school.

MS agreed to pass these comments on to KSW staff. The complaint had served to get the comments related to safeguarding changed and had highlighted some possible training issues for the inspector. The section 5 inspection would be a team of three inspectors who would be briefed about the complaint prior to the inspection, which should inform a carefully considered inspection. The Ofsted appeals process was carried out internally and even if a second level appeal was lodged this would also be addressed internally

CEO Key Priorities for Autumn Term 2020 –

1.To provide effective support for KWS to help the school prepare for a successful Section 5 Ofsted inspection.

2.To support OTP to impact dramatically on outcomes for pupils particularly as the gap will have been widened during the Covid-19 period. The school remained in special measures but would be due for Ofsted inspection in 2022, when all discussions will relate to the performance of the Y6 in SATs in 2021. Discussions had taken place with the HT on how this could be achieved and the need for great teaching and great lessons. These children needed to be priority both from a morale perspective, and strategic perspective. Directors discussed the distinct challenges that the OTP

community faced in comparison to the other Aspire schools including local crime figures.

PG asked if it was correct that Ofsted would not consider any Covid-19 issues.

MS responded that Ofsted would expect any issues related to the pandemic to have been addressed by that time.

CA asked if the HT at OTP was seeking help for Y6 teaching due to the relationship between the SATs results and the Ofsted inspection.

MS outlined plans that had been in place previously to address this, and the current situation. He highlighted that outstanding teaching was needed and he would be very involved in addressing this, giving full consideration of the resources and skills available within the wider MAT.

KD fully supported deploying resources across the MAT to wherever they were most needed. He questioned if any action or incentive was needed to encourage attendance at OTP e.g. visits from footballers, following concerns raised by the HT about the numbers of children who were hard to engage with during lockdown and fears that they may not return to school in September for varying reasons, highlighting that if the children were not in school they were not going to learn despite the availability of excellent teaching.

RS noted that in his work at an outdoor adventure setting he had worked with schools to deliver activity days in order to capture the children's interest which then encouraged them to engage with the school. This type of alternative activity could be considered in some format for OTP to encourage engagement.

PG summarised that the ideas discussed were worthy of consideration highlighting that it may not be known if there was a significant issue until the first week in September. PG requested that RS contact OTP HT direct to discuss further, and that any further ideas be passed to OTP HT or MS.

RS

CM highlighted that whilst incentives were really useful, an understanding of how the community function and their ability to plan ahead was needed, therefore rigorous action to follow up individuals until they were back in school, prioritising the most vulnerable and then the Y6 was warranted.

MS was thanked for his report.

BD/20/43 Pandemic issues

a. Current status

PG noted that the two weekly Board update meetings had been very helpful and that some positive ideas had come from these.

b. September plans

MS noted that all schools were planning for full reopening in September and were working hard to implement as much of the guidance as possible into their RA's, which were crucial to the reopening.

If staff present with cold/Covid-19 symptoms they will need to be away from school and tested for Covid-19. For some this may be a temporary 2-3 days until the test results were known, but for others it may be longer.

RS asked what action would need to be taken if someone tested positive for Covid-19. MS replied that the guidance stated that everyone within that bubble would need to be sent home to self-isolate, which in some cases would be the whole year group, or two year groups dependent upon the structure of the class.

c. Staffing issues

Those who were extremely clinically vulnerable continued to be advised to stay at home, and those who were clinically vulnerable e.g. pregnant women could now go to work but to stay as safe as possible by distancing from the children. The staffing challenges would vary from school to school and supply staff would need to be sourced which would incur extra cost and impact on the continuity for the children; this would need to be considered when planning,

BD/20/44 MAT expansion

24.1 Winthorpe Primary

MS, HD and PG had been working toward progressing this. MS reported that discussions had taken place with the solicitors, the LA, and staff and parents were supportive of the academisation. A meeting led by NCC HR team with staff and unions to discuss the TUPE process, policies, and conditions of service was to be confirmed for September by NCC. This meeting date would be the start of a 30-day formal consultation process which would hopefully end in time for academisation to take place on 1st November, and if it was delayed for any reason this would then be the 1st December.

24.2 Future expansion

MS reported that the RSC team were aware that Aspire wanted to grow and would be considered for a sponsored academy when a suitable academy became available in the area.

Another opportunity to grow would be by new school provision. Previous discussions had taken place regarding the possibility of a new school in the Bingham area, and the consideration of whether a joint bid with the DBE would present a stronger case; this would need to be discussed further when the opportunity arose.

CM informed that in her time working at the DBE substantial pieces of work had been carried out to prepare bids for other schools within the wider area which would support any future applications. CM would support a bid for a church school.

PG noted that whilst there was not a C/E school in Bingham itself, both ABC and EBSP were as close to the development sites as Bingham.

CM asked how schools were being identified for sponsorship to become academies when Ofsted were not currently carrying out inspections.

MS replied that whilst schools were not currently being rated as special measures, some schools who had been inspected previously had not been allocated to MATs prior to lockdown, and there were also some who had difficulties with their current sponsors.

PG thanked MS for his report.

BD/20/45 Finance and Workforce issues

25.1 Confirmation of 3-year budgets

PG informed Directors that the budgets had been approved by the FWC pending ratification by the full board of Directors. The minutes of the FWC meeting had been available for Directors to view prior to the meeting along with an update from HD.

HD informed that the changes made to the original budget related to two schools who had originally had more than 8% of their budget in reserves. Following discussion ABC had now allocated funding for a 0.4 FTE teacher in 21/22 and 22/23, and KWS had put some additional funds aside for capital expenditure as they had been unsuccessful in their CIF bids for the provision of gates and safeguarding of the site.

SJS had completed their budget on the old planner and had therefore had to review their figures to allow for the extra 0.75% support staff pay rise, as the old budget planner they were working on had only included 2%; the budget remained within the required reserves.

PG noted that some of the final carry forward figures exceeded the 8% figure. HD responded that two of the schools had exceeded this percentage carry forward however over the next two years OTP had reducing pupil numbers which would impact on funding and this carry forward would then be needed. KWS were a larger school and one month of salaries was higher than the 8%, so they would break even each year in their outturns which would have a reducing impact on their carry forward. KWS were also planning to invest more in their capital projects.

PG proposed that the budget was approved.

Directors unanimously

APPROVED

The 3-year budgets for all academies and the central team.

HD informed that ESFA require information relating to the next academic year only.

25.2 CIF bids

Out of the 8 bids submitted, only one for £50,000 for SJS to have slabs replaced had been successful.

The scores for the other bids submitted would not be released until the summer, with the appeals process delayed until September. An appeal could only be on the interpretation of the bid, and the bid itself could not be changed. The scores were needed before it would be known if an appeal could be made. The new round for bids would begin in December.

Some significant items had been unsuccessful for the second time, which was discussed at FWC. PG had agreed to write to the local MP to raise the issue.

HD informed that the Government were promising more funding however it was not known where this would be targeted. Directors discussed the issue of additional funding in relation to academies.

25.3 Finance & Workforce Committee

There were no other matters arising

25.4 Other finance/workforce issues

HD informed that two schools had been able to furlough staff from the before and after school clubs, and some furlough monies had now been received.

BD/20/46 MAT policies

MS presented the RAG rated central policies list (detailed within the CEO report) and highlighted the following points:

Policies which were a legal requirement, including new requirements and changes to legal requirements.

Exclusions policy was now a legal requirement when it had previously been incorporated within the Behaviour policy.

Some review dates could be extended to be reviewed every 3 years.

Managing Underperformance policy was ready for consultation with staff, however Directors were assured that there was already a system in place to address any issues.

All red rated policies would be addressed during the autumn term.

A lot of the HR policies were due for review in January 2021, but there had been few legislative changes which would need to be implemented within these policies.

HT's need to be informed of any updates so that their websites link to the MAT policies.

Policy 21- Appointment of Directors and Academy Governors Policy had been addressed recently.

Policy 31- Health and Safety Policy had been circulated to LGB Chairs with an explanation and no comments had been received. This would be ratified at the next LGB Chair' s Forum.

PG noted that he was happy to review the policies allocated to him previously.

PG

BD/20/47 Approval of new LGB members

There had been no requests for approval received.

PG informed that SJS LGB membership issues had been resolved. The LGB had agreed that the constitution be changed to have two elected staff representatives to comply with the Master Funding Agreement.

BG/20/48 AOB

KD suggested that the Board write to staff to thank them for their dedication during this difficult period.

MS noted that he had written to all staff the previous week and always tried to write to staff before writing to parents. This communication had been from him personally so he supported communication directly from the Board.

Further discussion followed and PG agreed to write to staff via email on behalf of the Board.

PG

BD/20/49 Confidentiality

Directors **AGREED** that there were no confidential items.

BD/20/50 Date and venue of meetings for 2020

- Thursday 17th September 2020 at 6 pm **via Zoom**
- Thursday 3rd December 2020 at 6 pm
- Thursday 4th February 2021 at 6 pm
- Wednesday 28th April 20201 at 6 pm
- Tuesday 20th July 2021 at 6 pm

Directors agreed that Board meetings be held face to face whenever possible.

All meetings to be held at East Bridgford St. Peter's Academy unless held virtually

Meeting closed 7.40 pm

CM acknowledged the massive amount of work PG had put in alongside MS and HD and thanked them for their efforts during this period, highlighting that Directors had felt well led and well informed.

PG acknowledged that it had been a team effort throughout and thanked all present for their support.



Signed(Chair) Date 02.10.20