

**Meeting of the Board of Trustees**

**7th October 2019, 5.30 – 7.30pm**

**Present**

**Trustees:** Alan Cufley (AC), Tessa Webber (TW), Lucy Wilby (LW), Susan Hamilton (SH), Lucy Sinnott (LS), Chris Batstone (CB), Sharon Brueton (SB) Chair, Donna Smith (DS)

**In attendance:** Nathan Waites Chief Financial and Operations Officer (NW),

**1. Apologies:** Sara Spivey (SS), Marion Hallsworth (MH) Company Secretary

**2. Quoracy:** was confirmed.

**AOB:** NW asked to update Trustees on the schools CIF bids at the end of the meeting and the Teachers Pay decision from the HR meeting on September 30

**Declarations of Interest:** There were no declarations of interest other than those already registered.

**Election of chair and vice chair**

There were no nominations for chair so this was deferred  
SH was nominated and voted in as vice chair

**3. Minutes of the last meeting.**

The minutes of the meeting held on July 15, 2019 were examined and LW noted that SB's name was misspelt. They were then approved and signed by the Chair.

**Action points**

All actions were either on the agenda or had been completed

**4. Strategy update**

This item was moved to the next meeting

**5. Admissions/school catchment concerns**

LW presented information about the parental letters of concern with regards to children at Solent Infant not being in catchment for Solent Junior due to discrepancies in the catchment of both schools which means they are not aligned.

It was noted that additional housing being built in the catchment would only increase the pressure on both oversubscribed schools.

Formally federating the schools would stop this but would mean a financial loss of £150,000 to the Solent Schools budget which makes it unviable. Some parents have approached the Education Authority who have told them the Trust needs to look at its Admissions Policy. SB said the Trust could change its Admissions Policy so children from feeder schools had a higher priority.

LS said it would have to be worded to say 'attending children in the feeder school's catchment area'

It was agreed to have an Admissions team meeting in November ready for a potential proposal to come to the next Trust meeting on December 9. This would mean any proposed change could go out for the required six week consultation before the deadline of January 31. In the meantime parents should be told the Admissions policy was under review.

**ACTION: Arrange an Admissions team meeting for November MH**

## **5. School accountability**

LW presented information about results in Early Years Foundation Stage which showed a good level of development and good results above the National average.

The clear priorities were writing and the girls' progress in maths

At Key Stage 2 the picture was not as good with progress scores down and LW said she would be sharing this with governors over the next two weeks. Parents removing their children from SATs and independent schools targeting year 5 children with scholarships had impacted on the figures. The priorities of writing and greater depth in Maths, reading and writing were on the improvement plan.

NW presented the Springfield data which showed that progress and attainment was not as good as in previous years but this had been expected. The high attainers did exceptionally well and Ebac results were strong, as was closing the gap for disadvantaged children in specific cases.

LW asked about the number of children doing double and triple science and whether that was on a par with other schools.

## **6. Budget**

NW handed out provisional year-end figures ahead of the audit. These had not been shared with Trustees ahead of the meeting as they had only been finalised in preparation for the audit the following day.

The De Curci Trust budget showed it had overspent by £7,433 due to a number of factors, including additional training.

The Springfield budget showed a variance of just £6,000 on a £6m budget plan (0.01% variance)

For both Solent Infant and Junior schools the variance was significantly higher.

In the case of SIS £36,352 and at SJS £76,493 on its £1.5m budget.

NW said these figures were subject to checking as he had not had the time to go through them closely due to Ofsted being in at Springfield and awaiting the schools to process final transactions before production.

TW commented that Governors at Solent Schools were already concerned about the schools being too cautious in their budgeting and this was going to look as though funding cuts were being made and pupil's education being impacted, when in actual fact investment could have been planned.

NW said it was more about savings being found rather than cuts being made, but LW said that where staff had been lost through natural wastage they had not been replaced, so positions had been cut and these decisions had been shaped by budget forecasts.

Both DS and SB said it was important to understand what had happened so action could be taken to make sure budget planning at the schools could be more effective and NW said he would be looking and checking the figures in case something had been missed.

AC asked what lessons could be learned from this, saying it was important that LW had information like this as early as possible so it can be spent effectively.

DS also asked about whether monthly budget reports were now in place as this was a requirement of the Financial Standards Handbook

### **7. Teachers Pay grant top up**

NW presented information to Trustees about the 2.75% pay rise which is either in the budget or covered by the grant top up.

SB said the HR committee had discussed this the week before and decided it was important to match other schools in the city.

**AC proposed that the HR committee recommendation to adopt the 2.75% rise be agreed.**

**TW seconded and it was unanimously carried.**

NW was asked to clarify whether or not an external SRMA visit is needed. NW Confirmed this was not necessary as NW is an SRMA and SS had confirmation of this.

### **8. MAT evaluations**

This item was moved onto the next agenda

### **9. Policy review**

Complaints Policy - this would be sent out and voted on by email

Whistleblowing - there were no changes and this was agreed.

Privacy Notice - this was adopted and should be published on the website

Health and Safety - There were no changes and this was agreed.

Business Contingency Continuity Plan This was agreed.

### **10. Terms of Reference**

Finance & Audit -unchanged and agreed

Human Resources -unchanged and agreed

Curriculum & Standards. -unchanged and agreed

Behaviour & Safety -unchanged and agreed

Resources -unchanged and agreed

### **11. Training**

It was noted that clerks need to keep a record of all training undertaken.

A new skills audit would also be carried out to identify training needs for the year ahead.

**It was agreed that Springfield move forward with buying into Hampshire Governor Services**

### **12. AOB**

DS expressed concern that without monthly information the budget was vulnerable.

NW said that the teams are preparing for the Year end.

SB said that the monthly managed accounts was something they were working towards now it was a new requirement.

### **CIF Bids:**

There had been success with the bid for A block at Springfield but not for the roof.

Solent Junior School had been unsuccessful

Solent Infant School had been unsuccessful

Philips are happy to resubmit with a few tweaks ready for a second try.

With regards to the Safeguarding project at Solent Junior School, both Philips and Synergy were interested.

Philips and Synergy are also interested in the decking project at Solent Infant School, as well as the perimeter fence.

NW recommended Synergy to take the lead on these bids following their success at Admiral Lord Nelson School.

**Chair role**

Finally due to no-one being nominated for the Trustee chair role it was agreed to advertise the Trustee vacancy as Chair of Trustees role.

There was no other business and the meeting closed at 7.40pm

Signature of Chair:

Date:

Items for the next meeting 9<sup>th</sup> December at Solent Infant School:

- Recruitment of new Trustee
- Strategy update
- Admissions/school catchment concerns
- MAT evaluations

**ACTION POINT SUMMARY**

Action	Person responsible	To be completed by
Arrange an Admissions team meeting for November	MH	November

The De Curci Trust, a charitable company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales with company number 10646541. Registered office address: Springfield School Central Road, Drayton, Portsmouth, Hampshire, United Kingdom, PO6 1QY.