

THINKING SCHOOLS ACADEMY TRUST
COMPANY NUMBER: 7359755

Subject	Strategic Meeting of the Board of Directors	Date	7 th May 2022
Room	Hilton at Cobham	Time	8.30am
Present	Stuart Gardner (SG), David Lycett (DL), Gerard Newman (GN), Julie Spurgeon (JS), Kaye Bettey (KB), Linda Randall (LR)	Clerk	Kelly Denton
Apologies accepted	Peter Martin, Derek Morrison, Ian Mason, Michael Bailey, Steve Geary,	In attendance	Lee Miller (LM)
Non-attendees			

Key Points Discussed and Action Items				
No.	Agenda Item	Action/Discussion	By whom	When
1.	Welcome and apologies for absence			
2	DfEs White Paper	<p>SG gave context to the education white paper and outlined that the board will work through the key elements of the paper, look at how it will impact the trust and for the Board to decide what action is needed within the Trust strategy</p> <p>The board had a detailed discussion covering the following elements of the white paper, which SG presented from his circulated presentation:</p> <p><u>An excellent teacher for every child.</u> Agreed that the new qualifications elements from the paper will be included in the trust Thinking Horizons CPD offer.</p> <p><u>Delivering high standards of curriculum, behaviour and attendance</u></p>		

	<p>School week of 32.5hours is being reviewed across the trust with a proposal going to headteachers in June which considers teachers working hours of 1265.</p> <p>Questions</p> <p>IM (Submitted question, in advance of the meeting): How will the working week changes impact of staff workload?</p> <p>SG: Explained the trust initial thoughts including study time and clarified that impact won't be on staff but maybe on SLT, which will be considered within the proposal</p> <p>LR: There a concern with giving children unsupervised session if they are not equipped to manage their time</p> <p>SG: Yes, it is an area which will need to be looked at and a challenge</p> <p><u>Targeted support for every child who needs it</u></p> <p>SG addressed the comment submitted from IM that the white paper's pupil pledge could be a positive in parent engagement. This is one the trust will explore as further information comes out but it's likely to impact on increased workload for teachers, it could impact on parent complaints as we have seen increased complaints so the trust will need to review the management and support for leaders on complaints going forward.</p> <p>The Trust will have a change in RSC and the trust will look to establish a good relationship as we do with the current RSC</p> <p><u>A strong and fairer school system</u></p> <p>The policy for all schools to be in a Trust or with plans to join or form one, has seen an increase in some schools looking at MATs on the back of this and likely to increase the number of schools joining our trust in the short term.</p> <p>The board discussed the due diligence of new schools and the need for a robust process including the implication of the White paper policy on two consecutive below good judgements.</p> <p>JS: Is the decision for a school to join the trust still the boards decisions based on our due diligence?</p> <p>SG: Yes and the need for good dd is key</p> <p>IM: There is potential growth for our trust, do we have a target or plan for growth</p> <p>SG: We don't have number targets for our trust growth, we have a principal of growth that the board set out a few years ago and growth has to fit within that.</p> <p><i>ACTION: KD to circulate the previously agreed principals of Trust growth with Board members</i></p> <p>LM added that the trust has reflected on onboarding new schools and set up a new approach to onboarding which is being applied to Brixham and is so far more</p>		
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	<p>structured.</p> <p>DL: Is there a national ideal MAT size?</p> <p>SG: Very long term the RSC would like 50 MATs per RSC, so that is a long-term target, however the 12 schools is still communicated as a good model</p> <p>DL: Could a change in government to a labour government change this?</p> <p>SG: The shadow secretary is on board with Academy trusts and the academy structure would be challenging to unpick, we don't know but it's likely they would work within the MAT/Academy structure</p> <p>SG: The trust will reflect on capacity and may get to the point where we cannot grow further at a certain point. The Trust are looking at structures internally with leaders and headteacher roles and will look at capacity in regions separately in line with the DoE capacity. The trust will also reflect on the onboarding process of new schools coming on board in scale and a longer timescale for being fully integrated into the trust.</p> <p>KB: How will the central services cope with increased schools, how do central services grow and adapt to increasing school numbers?</p> <p>LM: fundamentally we have the right structure for leadership in the central function but each period of growth needs to look at the support under that leadership to be able to deliver on a larger scale. The challenge for our Trust is that we don't make people redundant when they join the trust and therefore we compromise on the staffing model to accommodate new school staff and this is a challenge we continue to manage.</p> <p>KB: How does the travelling impact on wellbeing of our central staff</p> <p>LM: We are explicit in some leadership roles regarding travel but technology allows remote communication, and schools are receptive to this following the covid impact.</p> <p>We expect that our governance structure and local governance model will still work with the requirements of the white paper but will review as further information is communicated</p> <p><u>Local Authorities</u> LAs becoming MATs is not likely in the LAs we currently operate in but likely to occur in Hampshire making growth more unlikely in Hampshire</p> <p><u>Regulatory Review</u> Key changes highlighted and the board had a discussion around the exceptional circumstances in which a good school could move Trust and the likelihood, risk and implications for the trust of this was the case</p> <p><u>Definition of a Strong Trust</u></p>		
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3.	DfEs Green paper	<p>SG gave the background of the Green paper and the SEND provision nationally, explaining it was still in consultation.</p> <p>SG outlined the key elements of the Green paper and the impact on TSAT:</p> <p><u>A single national SEND and AP system</u> SG highlighted the positives of the scheme and the impact for our pupils will be clear when the national framework is made clear</p> <p><u>Excellent provision from EY to adulthood & a reformed and integrated role for AP</u></p>		

		<p>IM submitted a question on pushing back on the reintegration strategy to the DfE and the impact on funding. SG discussed the vision of the DfE with reintegration and this vision for the DfE is cemented in their approach</p> <p><u>National SEND standards & Key Metrics to monitor system health</u> This will provide increased clarity on provision expectations across our hubs and decrease inconsistencies in funding We will increase tracking of SEND students. SRP performance and monitoring closely is needed and an increase in our schools SRP provision. The trust QA process will be amended to ensure SEN provision is appropriate.</p> <p>Reflections on the Green paper and SEND provision Long term increases in SEND pupils nationally and the possibility of a special school joining our trust which would support current schools and pupils in current schools.</p> <p>The board had a detailed discussion on the pros and cons of a proactive approach to seeking a Special provision to join the trust and the impact on transforming the life chances of SEND pupils in our schools and in local communities, the board agreed that this is a strategic direction they would like the trust to take.</p> <p><i>ACTION: Strategic intent to explore Special school provision in our schools and growth of special schools into the trust</i></p>		
4.	Ofsted 5 year plan	<p>SG outlined the key areas of Ofsted's 5year plan</p> <p>There was a discussion around the support for Heads when Ofsted call and the boards were satisfied with the support the trust give heads. DfE suggest a third of schools will have a section 5 vs section 8. The board discussed the potential of trust schools getting section 5s rather than section 8s and the implications for trust schools and communities</p> <p>MAT evaluations are increasing and the Trust will continue to prepare for a MAT summary evaluation.</p>		
5.	Trust improvement	<p>SG lead and open discussion on reflections from this morning and areas the board would</p>		

	<p>plan</p>	<p>now like included in the strategic plan for 2022/2023 and asked for areas that the board thought should be made bigger, added or removed from the strategic plan.</p> <p><i>Board asked for succession planning for trust leadership to be included</i></p> <p>Board agreed with the TSfE development that was already in the plan and asked LM for an update. LM gave an update on the TSfE development and the plan to communicate with staff the identity of TSfE over term 5 & 6 to enable the start of phase 2 for September 2022</p> <p><i>Board asked for environmental/ sustainable trust policy to be developed</i></p> <p><i>Board asked for SG to explore further a SEND provision or AP joining the trust</i></p> <p><i>Board asked for the Professional Growth(PG)/think ahead elements of the strategic plan to also look at how the Heads PG could link with RGB chairs.</i></p> <p><i>Board asked for the Board own development to be included under reflective to be effective and incorporate the skills audit and possible external review</i></p> <p><i>ACTION: KD to produce a glossary on new developments in trust for example carousel, Brom Com</i></p> <p><i>ACTION: KD to pull together Key historical information for board and governors to give context for new governors (i.e. principles of growth the board agreed)</i></p> <p>The board had a discussion on the use of alumni across trust to support creation and development of pathways. Suggestions of the possibility of secondary school leavers exit survey and engagement with alumni</p> <p><i>Board asked for Pupil Voice work to be included in the trust development plan</i></p> <p>The board discussed the trust digital strategy and SG clarified that all schools are looking at their digital strategy milestones but not all schools will look at 121 role out as part of that. Impact will be reviewed before this is progressed. The delivering value for money pillar will look at 121 and digital strategy value for money, impact and return on strategy.</p> <p>The Board raised their previous decision for the CEO to support a school in south west and discussed if this what the right decision and if a similar decision would be made in future. Within this the board reflected on the benefits of relationship building in a new area of the</p>		
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6.	Maritime update	<p>LM gave an update on the Maritime academy detailing the temporary site is now needed for 2 years due to delays in permanent site. Stoke now not viable however an alternative identified and is a better option all round. LM has a meeting on 12th May 2022 to confirm the location and board will be communicated to on Friday 13th May 2022.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 12.36pm</p>		