

THINKING SCHOOLS ACADEMY TRUST
COMPANY NUMBER: 7359755

Subject	Meeting of Board of Directors	Date	Wednesday 11 th December 2019
Room	Trust Board Room & Meon Hub	Time	5pm
Present	Lee Miller; Stuart Gardner; Derek Morrison, Michael Bailey, Peter Martin; Gerard Newman; Linda Randall, Rachel Jordan-Evans (RJE), Dave Lycett (DL) (via VC)	Clerk	Jasmin Chudasama
Apologies accepted		In attendance	Kelly Denton (KD), & Natalie Sheppard (NS) (via VC). Jody Murphy (JM), Gwynn Bassan (GB), Mandy Gage (MG)
Non-attendees			

No.	Agenda Item	Action/Discussion	By whom
1.	Business Interests	No additional business interests were given	
2.	Apologies for Absence	Apologies were given for Steve Geary and Lee Trimby	
3.	Minutes and Matters arising		
4.	Company Secretary Report	<p>LM provided a verbal update of the performance of the two subsidiary companies to Thinking Schools Academy Trust; Thinking Solutions for Education (TSfE) and Little Thinkers.</p> <p>Little Thinkers is currently operating from one site in Portsmouth, previously Izzie's Neighbourhood Nursery, £21,000 of profit was gift-aided back to the Trust last academic year.</p> <p>The Trust have 100% ownership of TSfE, which was incorporated a year ago to provide external support to other Trusts and schools, to protect the finances of the Trust. The net profit was £17,000 last year which offset costs for this work. Both subsidiaries are performing well. The accounts for both</p>	

		<p>were provided to the Board and will also be taken to their respective Boards in January 2020 for final sign off.</p> <p>Q – Is the period of accounts for TSfE slightly more than a year?</p> <p>A – Yes it covers 13 months to the period of 31st August 2019.</p> <p>Trustee Vacancies:</p> <p>Following instruction from the previous Board meeting, LM & KD began to source a Trustee member with a marketing and communications background, as a missing area of expertise from the current Board. A CV of a suitable applicant was distributed to the Board, the members agreed that this individual would make a strong addition. The Board instructed for references to be sought and for SG & PM to conduct a formal interview process.</p>	
5.	CEO Report	<p>SG presented the CEO report.</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>Q [REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SG & PM attended a positive MAT review with the newly appointed RSC in October. However due to the election, conversations regarding the future were not able to be held. The RSC will be visiting NHO & VIC on 6th February 2020. <p>Q - In reference to the CEO report, what are the staffing challenges cited at GCA?</p> <p>A – Leadership appointments at the school have been turbulent. JM is now overseeing the school in a Headteacher and DoE capacity successfully. The leadership issues will be resolved in January and the school will be in a strong position.</p>	

		<p>PM congratulated the Executive team for the completion and movement on a number of strategic developments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trust performance management has been completed with Blue Sky used across the Trust. MB recommended the proposals for performance management, DM seconded this. SG commented that this is the most consistent level of performance management reviews that have been held within the Trust; the hub based DoE model has certainly helped to support this. - SG presented the five pillars for Trust Improvement. The ‘evolution of self’ is at the heart of our educational mission in terms of empowering our students and staff. This is in a pilot phase in terms of engagement in our cultural capital projects. The Thinking Foundations project has been paused due to capacity. However reflection has particularly increased across the Trust central team, with the finance team now reflecting on their adherence to the central Trust values on a weekly basis. - Trust of Choice – the work NS has done in Portsmouth to narrow the gap of ‘we are one’ has been successful this term. The Heads are working much more collaboratively. GB has set up all heads of departments to speak on Teams each fortnight and lead through development of knowledge banks under the new curriculum and share best practice; this is really driving conversations around consistency now. GB will expand this from core subjects to all subjects next year. The Executive team set the agenda and outcomes are then shared back to Headteacher. This is reducing the levels of silos; these departments are now more connected than they have ever been. - Growing Great Leaders – To identify talent through a rigorous evaluation process. GB is leading on this in a number of areas. TSAT have applied to launch a Kent and Portsmouth SCITT in partnership with GLF as a satellite, it will be called ‘Think Ahead Teacher Training’. This will be a huge opportunity for the Trust to recruit it’s own teachers to train. The pilot SCITT will consist of ten secondary trainees in Portsmouth and Kent. Think Ahead will offer teacher training, early career training along with middle and senior leadership training. - Success Through Learning – the primary schools are further ahead with their consistency journey. It is important to recognise that the Trust has never been as forward thinking as now. Increasing pupil cultural capital is a big focus for Headteachers, who are expecting to create a 	
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		<p>list of activities for pupils moving forward dependent on location, including visiting an art gallery, visiting London, trips abroad and other local activities to educate pupils on the shape of their community and therefore identity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognition – LM will be exploring the process around the Investors in People accreditation. These is a lot of value in this award outside of the education sector. People make up the majority of our resource. - SG pans to move forward with plans for the 24/7 CPD offer for staff and how this can be tracked. GB will be exploring iHasco hosting this offer. We aim to give staff a bespoke CPD offer which they can access flexibly to match their needs. - Building with Confidence – we expect a number of Ofsted inspections next year. NHO, GCA & TPA will receive a section 8 inspection, whilst MIS and Goodwin receive section 5 inspections. <p>Q - Please confirm the strategy in place for the upcoming Ofsted inspections. A – There is an 18 month plan in place for the school, KS2 outcomes for 1819 were above national. NHO has some leadership challenges due to maternity etc but plans for 1920 will support this. SG and GB have spoken in depth about the strategy for RGS and managing the transition to a two year KS4. NS is supporting and challenging leaders ahead of the MIS inspection, the school is currently Outstanding. TPA has some very large mixed cohorts coming through, NS is supporting in the behaviour management of this along with the expansion build. GA’s QA outcome shows that it is on a positive trajectory towards becoming a Good school.</p> <p>SG was delighted to confirm that IBJ was inspected last week, the school received a Good across the board. NS worked very closely with the governors, some of whom were newly appointed this academic year, to ensure their knowledge was sound. The school has been in an RI position for at least twelve years. We will be working with PLMR to evidence and publicise the impact the Trust has had on schools in challenging circumstances; for example HGS hadn’t had a good school on the site for a decade, Victory 25 years, TPA 8 years, CCA 18 years to name a few.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowing our Schools & Safety Net Not Straight Jacket – the primary schools share a lot of commonality but also have a lot of disparate practice. The data systems do have an understanding of national collection of data. This year will focus on standardising AAB reports, tracker systems in hubs, what data we want and when we want it. When the government 	
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release the progress measure between current Y6 students from their Y2 outcomes we will need to adopt a system to benchmark.

Q – Why are Portsmouth and Kent using different Primary data packages?

A – When the DfE removed levels schools naturally began using other programmes and taking out licences at different points, meaning contracts end at different times. We must consider a whole data package that is fit for purpose for all schools. Both hubs have frustrations with their current system so it is likely an entirely new system will be adopted.

The assessment working group will be looking for a package that can track students from YR-Y11, this is pressing as our expectation is that at least half of our secondary cohorts will be from a TSAT primary school. This tracker should allow us to evidence the impact of an all-through education. SG asked the Board to approve the draft strategy for the assessment group. DM proposed the Board approve this, DL seconded this proposal.

[REDACTED]

- The next phase of the Maritime Academy build begins next week, with a meeting once a week between DfE, Trust and Architects to develop the site. A final architectural plan will be available for the Board to review by the end of March 2020. The biggest risk around the development is around the planning application joint to the residential development, which is out of our control.
- TPA Expansion – the project is currently six weeks behind schedule. NS has been heavily involved in the project and following a progress meeting last week, is now looking at contingency plans with the developers for a handover in June, which is delayed from Easter. We remain confident that the large September 2020 intake can be accommodated, however the site restrictions are having an impact on behaviour.
- RGS Expansion – architects have been appointed. The project is on schedule for a September

		<p>2021 opening, avoiding building during exam seasons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- TSfE Contracts – As contracts come to an end, new ones develop. Chapel Street and Parallel Learning will commence from September. Dan High and Marta Kennett will be leading on the Chapel Street commitments of a day a week of their time. The South Dartmoor Academy Trust contract will end on 31st December 2019. <p>[REDACTED]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Communication Strategy – In regards to our employee opinion survey and staff, they need to be aware of how they will be communicated with. JC resignation will allow opportunity to appoint a specialist communications lead, who will benefit from mentoring from the new marketing specialist Board member.- KS4 – the new Ofsted framework poses some changes required across the Trust’s KS4 delivery. Our schools servicing deprived communities require a three year KS4 to achieve required outcomes.- KS2 results were discussed in the previous meeting. Thanks was noted to JM for her work to collate, track and deliver current data. IBJ unfortunately did not take the assessment at the same time as the other schools, NS will be working to align IBJ over time as the school transitions into a Primary school, upon hopefully acceptance of it’s application.- Reading data – broadly speaking there are improvements on this year in comparison to last year already. Headteachers have discussed strategies to accelerate progress.- Maths data – AFS have some difficulties with children in the Y6 cohort with high pupil premium and SEN levels. There is some concern around the MJS progress and trajectory to get to zero.- Secondary Mocks – HGS appear to have a track record at bouncing back at the last track to a positive P8 position, however this culture needs to shift. The Victory outcomes have uncovered some weaker areas, MG is now spending more time at the school, with SG supporting at HGS in her absence, until the new Principal joins in January. [REDACTED]	
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		<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - External QA outcomes – GA showed emerging Good qualities from it’s SLT. CCA had a Good outcome, [REDACTED]. [REDACTED]. SG noted thanks to GB for his support in updating the QA procedures Trust wide, all schools are now experiencing a similar and consistent QA experience. 	
6.	Reports from Committees	<p>Strategic Committee – no concerns or risks raised, the future plans and strategic goals for the Trust were presented to the Board at the committee and in the CEO report item.</p> <p>Audit & Risk Committee – the year end accounts were reviewed and the main agenda item of the meeting. No major issues were identified. GN proposed that the Board agree to sign off the accounts, MB seconded this proposal. GN highlighted that Governance has been downgraded from a red risk area to amber within the internal audit report, showing definite improvement. The scope of the 19/20 internal audit will be around data and security. The committee held a discussion around the way that Risks and Issues are reported, along with the costs and plans associated with the IT strategy. The committee have asked Thinking Technology to produce a strategic plan to review what equipment will need replacing over the next 3-5 years and a broad sizing of what investment the Trust needs to begin to make to accommodate the IT demand within education. February budget meetings will dictate next steps around investment funding.</p> <p>Staffing, Pay & Performance Management Committee –</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The committee were updated on the HR transformation project, which has been a great success with all staff successful paid via the new payroll system. Expected staffing needs for September 2020 are being finalised, job evaluation and benchmarking exercised will begin in 2020. This will be a significant piece of work as the support staff pay framework has not been reviewed in six years. The current pay ranges are not fit for purpose. The pay policy for teachers and support staff was also approved.

Finance Committee – LM delivered the 18/19 financial position which is reflected in the audited statements. Discussions were held around the budget forecasts following changes in the October census information from the Headteacher predictions, which the budgets were based on. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

This proves to the Board how resilient the Trust is and how well contingencies are built into budgets. 20/21 funding has been modelled on the positive income following the Prime Ministers announcement

		<p>regarding per-pupil funding.</p> <p>Operations Committee – Development of Trust projects were delivered to the committee. A discussion was held around the issues with the Single Network implementation. A disaster recovery plan was presented which was a very extensive and well worked document. GN thanked the contributors to the meeting, all reports were very well prepared and professional.</p>	
7.	Data Protection Policy	<p>Following updates from the DfE regarding a new requirement around bio-metric data, KD has incorporated this into the policy and is embedding this action across the organisation.</p> <p>LD proposed that the Board approve this updated policy, RJE seconded this.</p>	
8.	RGS Expansion	<p>The Board formalised and reviewed the appointment of Logan Construction as the contractor following the tender process. Nine responses were received in the tender process which was commissioned by Bailey Partnership. The funding is coming directly from the DfE secondary school expansion fund. This decision must be agreed by the Board due to the level of spend.</p> <p>MB proposed that the Board approve the appointment, DL seconded this.</p>	
9.	Communication to RGB & AAB	<p>KD confirmed that no communication has come up to the Board from RGB & AAB as the cycle is not due to commence until 2020.</p> <p>Thanks were given to KD for her efforts with the improvement journey of governance.</p>	
10.	AOB & Correspondence to the Chair	<p>SG noted that the validated Primary data for 18/19 was released on Friday, showing a very positive picture for Medway schools. With NHO now the top performing school in Medway and in the top 50 out of 21,409 schools in the country, which is an absolutely exceptional. Thanks was given to JM for this exceptional outcome.</p> <p>The Board thanked JC for her support in governance and her role within the Trust as she leaves the organisation ahead of the next Board meeting.</p>	
11.	Items for Next Agenda	To be confirmed prior to the meeting	

12.	Date of Next Meeting	12/02/20	
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