



COPPICE PRIMARY PARTNERSHIP

PUBLIC MINUTES FOR THE 2022/2023 MEETING OF THE TRUST BOARD HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8th FEBRUARY 2023

Trust Board present at the meeting held on 29th March 2023 approved these minutes as a true and accurate record, and signed on Governor Hub electronically

PRESENT

Carole Hardy (Trustee) Trust Board Chair	Mr John Edgar (Trustee) Trust Board Vice Chair
Mr Neil McDonald (Trustee)	Andrew Maitland (Trustee)
Peggy Murphy (Trustee)	Isabelle Linney-Douet (Trustee)

IN ATTENDANCE

Mark Chatley (CEO)	Carina Cuddington (CFO)
Andrew Lacey (Business Manager)	Stacey Marsh (Governance Clerk)

PART A – PUBLIC MINUTES

Yellow highlighted text demonstrates Challenge / questions to the Trust representatives

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- Trust Board members were welcomed to the meeting by the Trust Board Chair and introductions were made to the new Governance Professional, Stacey Marsh
- CH thanked the Trust Board for their support and flowers recently received, and is very grateful for JE stepping in as Chair.
- No apologies were received for this meeting; the meeting was nevertheless quorate throughout.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- Trust Board members were given the opportunity to declare any business interests against the agenda to which none were declared.

3. MINUTES

- Both the public and confidential minutes from the 7th December 2022 were approved as a true and accurate record by all present.

4. ACTIONS OUTSTANDING

ITEM	ACTION	OWNER	UPDATE
Actions carried forward from 19th October 2022			
1.	(4.2) Report educational KPI's to Educational and Curriculum committee for review	Mark Chatley	COMPLETE <i>Shared with ECC on 16/1/23</i>
2.	(4.2) An abbreviated version of data pack to be reported to Trustees	Mark Chatley	COMPLETE <i>Included in documents for TB meeting</i>
3.	(4.2) Trust vision and mission statement re-wording - ongoing	Mark Chatley	COMPLETE

			<i>Update included in verbal report for TB meeting</i>
4.	Update Health and Safety Policy to reflect new ASHP boilers at Coxheath Primary School	Andy Lacey	COMPLETE Waiting on formal training to be completed, and details of servicing requirements.
Actions arising from the 7th December 2022			
5.	Note on finance Governor role and LGB training	Mark Chatley / John Edgar	COMPLETE <i>To be shared at the meeting</i>
7.	Process appointment of new Member	Carole Hardy / John Edgar / Andy Lacey	08/02 CH – has emailed and awaiting contact. Action to be carried forward.
8.	Take forward CST assurance framework for Trust Governance	John Edgar	COMPLETE 08/02 update; listed on agenda

**Action number 6 is recorded within the confidential minutes of this meeting records.*

5. TRUST MATTERS

Future Growth

- MC gave an update to the Trust Board and referred to the published white paper that suggested for all schools to be part of a Trust structure by 2030 with a preference to be around 10 schools to provide strength; this paper led to a school bill which has subsequently been removed and therefore there is no current pressure for schools to continue moving forward with the Trust model, however this could change. Coppice Primary Partnership currently has 3 schools and therefore could be considered as vulnerable as it does limit what can be achieved if they remain this size.
MC has arranged meetings with three headteachers of local schools to discuss their views on academisation in general, and not to necessarily promote Coppice Primary Partnership. Conversations have largely been to find out what their thoughts are, concerns that may be holding them back with moving to an Academy, and their expectations of what being part of a Trust may be. Off the back of these meetings, MC is considering what the Coppice Primary partnership offer may look like should it need to become a marketing campaign. MC shared that he initially sent out 15 emails to local schools and so far, three have replied which are schools that are known to him; 2 have met with him and 1 is due to take place next term.
Both schools that he has met with so far have very different contexts with the ultimate feeling being that the schools do not want to lose their identities and autonomy to decide what happens in their own schools.
- Work is being done around defining core values and how these can be shared with more clarity and communication around what it is like to be a Coppice Primary Partnership school; the aim is to then use this to highlight the benefits of working / learning within the Trust.
- During a recent Kent MAT Alliance (KMA) meeting, the Regional Schools Commissioner (RCS) attended remotely to discuss academy growth. One of the main points was around the process that the RSC follows when a school approaches them to become an Academy, and how they choose a Trust to recommend. Going forward, Coppice Primary Partnership need to provide the RSC with a statement for how they wish to continue growing to ensure that they can be recommended to schools during these situations. Trustees shared that a local Trust has recently shared a leaflet that highlights why schools should look to join their Trust.
MC suggested that when he spoke with two schools recently, it was clear that there is a lot of negative perception around when schools join a Trust, it is largely similar to a small business joining a large corporate organisation and there being risk to their identity and for there to be a considerable gap between those working in the schools, and leaders of the trust, and this is the challenge for Coppice Primary Partnership to overcome.

Another key area that was looked at by the RSC was around how local is local and perhaps this needs to be part of the Trustees discussions going forward.

Trustees asked if the Coppice Primary Partnership would be best to continue as Primary Phase;

MC stated that currently, the addition of Primary Schools would allow them to continue with their Primary Focus which is their strength, however a SEND provision may be an area that they could explore and shared that there are other KMA Trusts that have explored this with success.

Headteacher Appointment

- A new Headteacher has been appointed at Loose Primary School; Trevor North is joining from a Primary School in Folkestone and has already began working with Sarah Holman.
Trustees asked how the appointment of Loose was shared with the wider Governor and Member community to which they were advised that this is an area that they need to improve on for future appointments. Going forward the three school Headteachers will be tasked with developing their strategic leadership with a commitment of time being given to them every half term.
Headteachers will also be involved with driving working parties across the trust for curriculum and quality of education.

Strike Action

- All 3 schools within the trust were able to stay open on the recent strike day with very little disruption to the school day. There are three more strikes planned and the numbers of those wanting to join the strike could change at each stage.

Trustees asked if there were any staff members that did not communicate their intention to strike;

MC shared that there were a few teachers who were very late to share that they would be striking, however they are not expected to inform their schools if they wish to join the strike.

A number of teachers have shared that they are receiving a high volume of text messages and emails from unions, encouraging them to join the strike and not inform their schools in order to increase the impact of the strike days.

Trustees all felt that whilst they are sympathetic to the cause and the reasons that the strike is happening, teachers are being put in a very difficult situation by the unions.

6. FEEDBACK FROM LOCAL GOVERNING BODIES

Loose Primary School

- Governors considered the nurture provision at the school and particularly looked at how the impact of the provision is measured through case studies and the use of Boxall Profiles.
- There have been a number of complaints made about the quality of the work to complete the Capital Investment Fund (CIF) projects. These have been investigated by a Trustee today, and the follow-up work seems to have been successful.

Work has been completed in the classroom that was damaged by a contractor; they have replaced the ceiling tiles, and flooring. The carpet has been cleaned rather than being replaced and it seems better, however, the classroom would benefit from being aired.

Trustees asked who has paid for this work to be put right;

TBM shared that the contractor company has paid to rectify the poor works completed previously. The school has also provided a list of resources that were damaged as a result of the leak including books and tables; they are waiting on confirmation around how best to replace these items.

- There is a general concern about recruitment particularly the pay scales for High Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs) and the responsibilities for lower paid roles. They discussed the use of Apprentices within the school, and if this would be something that could have a wider trust impact.
Trustees suggested that this would be a worthwhile area for HR to explore as it links to the apprenticeship Levi.

CFO shared that the indicative figures for support staff pay show that every Kent Range salary will have a

minimum increase of £2000 from April 2023. This calculates, for example between 8.9% and 10.4% with 7% already built into the budget. Whilst this will be financially stretching, it is necessary to ensure that schools are competitive with salaries in the non-educational sector.

Trustees highlighted that the recent teacher pay rise was 5% and 1.5% for support staff so this increase for support staff will go towards alleviating some of divide between those roles.

- A member of staff at Loose Primary School has completed a piece of work around the cost of supply cover and the recruitment of HLTAs would support the reduction in the money that is being spent on external supply cover, however these are the positions that they are struggling to recruit for, largely because of the salary being offered.

St Katherine's School

- At the recent Interim Executive Board (IEB), there were conversations around how and when behavior issues are reported; the policy has been amended to reflect the cohort and the changes are due to be implemented.
- Work around attendance is being done to support attendance, particularly to ensure that there is consistency around when certain actions are made, and to bring the process in-line with the procedures that take place across the Trust.
- Admissions arrangements were approved and Trustees approved to ratify this decision. CEO will send this updated policy to the Local Authority (LA) for publishing.

Coxheath Primary School

- CPS – Generally quite happy. Governors felt beneficial to talk about schools first, good balance of discussion. Happy to stay with.

7. STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

Trust Strategic Document

- Trustees highlighted that the strategy for growth needs to be included in the Trust Strategic document.
- As part of the recent Headteacher recruitment, it became apparent that they need to do some further work around the four purposes to provide clarity to what the aim is, what is being provided and what the expected evidence looks like. Following the INSET day, they did a rebranding of excellence and through the CEO's appraisal they explored trademark behaviors that can be used to hold to account in a measurable and tangible way.

Trustees suggested for this to be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

Action – Add trademark behaviors to the agenda for the next Trust Board meeting.

Data pack

- CEO has provided feedback on History and Geography with a few changes made around the "you said, we did" area to provide clarity around questions that were asked.
Reflecting on the changes made, Trustees were assured that the curriculum is now structured effectively.
- There has been some work completed around school timetables; "soft starts" are still in place with gates opening for a period of time before registration and schools are being asked to ensure that the time that the children have in school before registration is being utilised effectively. This is an area that hasn't previously been looked at in this level of detail, and it has therefore given the schools data to support where changes can be made. There are still some Covid-19 processes in place across the schools which are largely around the start of the school day and lunchtime periods. This can therefore have a knock-on effect to the amount of curriculum time for individual subjects, and this isn't consistent across the Trust.

Trustees questioned why the soft starts are still in place as these were originally introduced as a safe way to bring children into school during the Covid-19 pandemic;

CEO explained that whilst this was introduced as a Covid-19 safety measure, it still remains a positive move to allow parents to have a bigger window to get their children into school.

Trustees asked where the school stands from an insurance perspective; particularly who is in charge of these children before the start of the school day at 9.00am;

CEO explained that the teachers are in the classroom at the start of the "soft start" window, and for example, at St Katherine's School there has been a focus on PSHE for the children to explore before the start of the school day.

Trustees asked if, going forward, each school will be working from the same timetable;

CEO advised that rather than each school working from the same timetable, they are making suggestions around the amount of time that the schools should be spending on subjects. For example, this work has

highlighted that there is a disparity between the proportion of time for English and Math's, and this is reflected within the data for those schools.

For example, at St Katherine's School, they have Math's as a focus area on their School Development Plan (SDP), however this focus isn't shown in the proportion of time they are allocating for this level of focus in their timetable.

Now that the timetables have been analysed, there will be follow-up conversations with the individual schools and changes made to ensure that the timetable reflects the work that the schools need to do.

- **Trustees questioned how far the data from the data pack is shared; for example do Teachers have the opportunity to see comparative data for all schools within the Trust;**

The data pack presented to Trustees is shared with the Local Governing Body for each school, however beyond that there is no stipulation that this is shared beyond that. Following discussion Trustees concluded that it would be worthwhile for this information to be shared with the wider teaching community as there may be potential learning opportunities for teachers to collaborate and for the development of middle leaders.

CEO highlighted that this would be best shared by the individual Headteachers rather than the executive team. This could therefore be tied in as a development opportunity for teachers to collaborate, and Headteachers can be asked how they are providing the capacity to support staff with that process.

Trustees suggested that the data is shared with a narrative rather than just the numbers so that teachers can fully understand the context of the predictions and targets.

Action – All teachers to receive autumn trust data pack.

8. POLICIES AND KEY DOCUMENTS

Articles of Association

- This is in the process of being updated; the school are exploring who would be best suited to complete the update.

Looking at the number of Trustees, they may want to consider increasing the number to 11 with the annotation that there is no expectation to fill the vacancies straight away.

Action – TBM to make changes with new DfE requirements into the Articles of Association.

Risk Register

- Trustees highlighted that the recruitment challenges should be added to the Risk Register, particularly TAs and HLTAs as this is an area that all trust schools are reporting.

Action – TBM to change "teachers" to "staff" on page 12.

Health Needs for Children Who Cannot Attend School Policy

- **Trustees questioned in there needs to be more content in the policy around parent engagement;**

Action- CEO to make suggested changes to Health Needs for Children Who Cannot Attend School Policy and re-present at the next Trust Board meeting.

Investment Policy

- This policy was approved at the Finance and Audit Committee meeting on the 25th January 2023; Trustees approved to ratify this decision.

Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions

- This policy was approved by Trustees.

Children in Care Policy

- This policy was approved by Trustees.

Online Safety Policy

- This policy was approved by Trustees.

First Aid Policy

- This policy was approved by Trustees.

9. FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE UPDATE

- Minutes have been shared from the meeting on the 25th January 2023; these highlight that the management accounts and cashflow is healthy with the current out turn at £1.2m.

There was discussion around reserves being moved into high interest savings accounts.

Committee member agreed to give notice to cleaning contractors to re-tender as a result of issues around the quality of cleaning.

Internal audits have been arranged to take place in February and June 2023.

The Annual submission was viewed by the committee, who approved for the responses to be submitted.

- In relation to the investment opportunities, the CFO explored different accounts for the trust to improve their return of their investments; this is being written into the Finance Policy so that they can invest monies into a maximum of 12-week notice accounts to be considered when looking at the cashflow.

The Finance and Audit Committee have also asked for the policy to state that the trust will only invest their capital in areas that have a guaranteed financial return.

10. EDUCATION AND CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

- Minutes have been shared from the meeting on the 23rd January 2023; these highlight that all representatives from the LGBs are becoming more involved and understand what is being asked of them. For the second meeting of the committee, there were purposeful discussions and significant questions from Governors.
- There was a considerable discussion around the leadership capacity at St Katherine's School and what more can be done to support the needs of the school.
- The science curriculum is currently being written by CEO as a result of limited capacity anywhere else in the trust. He is putting together "skeleton" style plans for the Science leads to develop for their schools from there. This overview will give clearer coherence and consistency for the science leaders to be able to plan resources from the lesson plans.

Trustees challenged why the curriculum is being written by the CEO and highlighted the need for additional curriculum support at trust level. Going forward, if the additional support was in place, as well as driving curriculum, they could also drive how the data pack is used within schools as well.

Trustees questioned where does Headteacher accountability lie for their curriculum when it is being written by an executive leader of the trust.

CEO explained that the Art curriculum was recently written by the art leader at Coxheath Primary School, however, there isn't the same level of strength within the science department to replicate this model.

Giacomo Mazza comes from a science background; however, he has not had the time capacity to support the new science curriculum. This may change following the Ofsted inspection.

Trustees asked if the Trust had explored an external curriculum advisor being bought in to develop the science curriculum rather than it being the responsibility for the CEO;

CEO shared that science is a particularly complex curriculum to write; they did explore "off the shelf" schemes to adopt, however after looking into it, they concluded that the individual schemes of work were not detailed enough.

CFO suggested that adding capacity to the executive team to support curriculum would be worth exploring when the look at recruitment needs.

11. GOVERNANCE

- Trustees would like to explore a Governance review; this is broken down into 4 sections linked to the Ofsted framework. CH and JE would like to look at this over a 3-year plan with Trustees looking at specific areas to be more purposeful and less overwhelming for them.
- Trustees approved the following changes to the Trust / Governor Membership:
 - Sam Sanders, Governor at Coxheath Primary School; term of office renewed until the 7th February 2025
 - Katherine Atkinson, Associate Governor at Coxheath Primary School; changed to Co-opted Governor, and term of office renewed until the 7th February 2025.

Action – Clerk to make amendments on Governor Hub for Sam Sanders and Katherine Atkinson

- The work that has been done by JE and MC is now being explored as part of the Trustee / Governor induction process. This can also be used to support training for LGB's and a way of making their roles relevant.

In relation to monitoring, this should link in with the priorities outlined in the SDP for each school to ensure there is strategic oversight to support the schools' priorities

CH passed on thanks on behalf of the Trust Board to JE and MC for their commitment

- Trustees discussed remote attendance at meetings, and concluded that whilst this was appropriate during the Covid-19 pandemic, meetings should only be attended in person from now on. Referring to the Articles of Association, it states “any trustee is able to participate in telephone / video”, however, Trustees unanimously agreed that this should only be in exceptional circumstances rather than standard practice.

Action – As part of the update to the Articles of Association; meeting attendance should be updated to state “Any trustee is able to participate in telephone / video attendance in exceptional circumstances only”.

11. SAFEGUARDING, AND HEALTH AND SAFETY

- A policy for staff to report low-level concerns is being implemented to align with current safeguarding procedures in school in-line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KELSI) section 4.

12. CONFIDENTIALITY

- Trustees confirmed that a separate set of “confidential” minutes be recorded for this meeting.

13. MEETING OUTCOMES

14. NEXT MEETINGS

- Education and Curriculum Committee – Monday 13th March
- Finance and Audit Committee - Wednesday 15th March
- St Katherine’s School Local Governing Body – Monday 20th March
- Coxheath Primary School Local Governing Body – Tuesday 21st March
- Loose Primary School Local Governing Body – Wednesday 22nd March
- Trust Board – Wednesday 29th March

15. MEETING CLOSE

- CH thanked everyone for their attendance and contribution to the meeting today.
- The meeting concluded at 8.30pm

ACTIONS TABLE

Item	Action	Owner	Update
<i>Items carried forward from 7th December 2022</i>			
1.	Process appointment of new Member Update from 8 th February meeting: CH – has emailed and awaiting contact.	CH	
<i>Matters arising from 8th February 2023</i>			
3.	Trust Strategic Document; Add trademark behaviors to the agenda for the next Trust Board meeting.	SM	
4.	Trust Data Pack Action – All teachers to receive autumn trust data pack.	MC	
5.	Articles of Association TBM to make changes with new DfE requirements into the Articles of Association.	TBM	
6.	Health Needs for Children Who Cannot Attend School Policy CEO to make suggested changes to Health Needs for Children Who Cannot Attend School Policy and re-present at the next Trust Board meeting.	CEO	

7.	Governance Clerk to make amendments on Governor Hub for Sam Sanders and Katherine Atkinson	SM	
8.	Meeting attendance As part of the update to the Articles of Association; meeting attendance should be updated to state “any trustee is able to participate in telephone / video attendance in exceptional circumstances only”.	TBM	

** Action 2 and 9 stored in separate confidential minutes*