

**ETHOS ACADEMY TRUST**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES**  
 Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> October at 4pm via Microsoft Teams

<b>Present:</b>	Victoria Del Giudice (VDG)	Chair & Trustee
	Karen Bennett (KB)	Trustee
	Gary Cox (GC)	Trustee
	Graham Dewhirst (GD)	Trustee
	Jem Greenwell (JG)	Trustee
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Dewi Bennett (DB)	CFOO
	Lesley Conway (LC)	HR Manager
	Jayne Foster (JF)	CEO
	Ann-Marie Oliver (AMO)	Director of Education
	Rebecca Smith (RS)	Executive Head, Elements Academy (items 1-3 only)
	Vicky Woodrow (VW)	Head, Elements Academy (items 1-3 only)
	Melanie Nightingale (MN)	Clerk to the Board

Item	Action
<b>1</b>	<b>Welcome, Apologies &amp; Declarations of Interest</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apologies were received and accepted from Alison Black. Karen Bennett would be late. Victoria Del Giudice would need to leave early.</li> <li>• There were no declarations of interest.</li> <li>• All were welcomed to the meeting, including Vicky Woodrow and Rebecca Smith, who would be presenting on Elements Academy.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>Previous Minutes &amp; Matters Arising</b>  <u>Resolved:</u> the minutes of the meeting held on 15 <sup>th</sup> September 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.  There were no matters arising.
STRATEGY & PLANNING	
<b>3</b>	<b>Bringing the Trust to Life – Introduction to Elements Academy</b>  Rebecca Smith (Head Teacher at Ethos College and Executive Head at Elements Academy) presented as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elements Academy had developed its own values of respect, kindness, resilience and ambition, which aligned with the Trust values and mission.</li> <li>• 104 pupils (age 7-16) on roll – plan to grow to 135.</li> <li>• 28 pupils at Elevate provision, which would reduce to 25.</li> <li>• 27 teaching spaces – plan to increase to 29.</li> <li>• 61 members of staff who were experts in SEND (special educational needs and disabilities) and SEMH (social, emotional and mental health) – plan to increase to 87 in readiness for increasing pupil numbers.</li> </ul>

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- Before and after pictures of the building were presented. A significant amount of building work, furniture removal, deep cleaning and IT infrastructure work had taken place prior to opening.
- Existing staff, new staff and Trust staff had worked together to support with moving in and preparing classrooms.
- Nurture spaces were being developed according to individual group need.
- The school had a therapeutic team and several therapy rooms.

Vicky Woodrow (Head of Elements) presented on the progress made in the first half term:

- Six inset days included statutory training, introduction to EAT, Team Teach, setting up learning environments.
- Parent / Carer and Pupil Day – 85 families visited for a tour of building, completion of induction documents etc.
- Careers Fair and MacMillan Coffee Morning.
- Drop Down Day, including sporting challenges and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) activities.
- Space Day for year 7 nurture group.
- Forensic Science Day for year 11.
- Halloween decorating competition.
- Community Links: Elements had entered the Dinnington Scarecrow Festival and there would be a scarecrow walk during half term.
- VW shared some positive parental feedback.

**Trustees congratulated RS and VW on bringing together the young people, new staff team and transforming the building in a short period of time and all that they had achieved in the first half term.**

**Trustees asked if one particular moment stood out for VW and RS.** VW said that the parent day stood out for her and seeing the faces of the children and parents in the new school was the very highlight of her career to date. RS described the first inset day when staff were welcomed to EAT and VW presented the vision and values. She commented that it was good seeing the staff team come together for first time. RS also highlighted the recent safeguarding audit when she showed round another member of Trust staff and the visit earlier that week from RMBC (Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council) colleagues, both of which enabled her to see the school from a fresh perspective. The school was being shown at its best and young people were confident to share their classroom spaces with the visitors and celebrate their achievements.

**JG noted the big transformation from the building site in August to seeing the school at the APRC (Academy Performance Review Committee) meeting in September. She thanked RS and VW for all the hard work that had gone into turning the building into a school and thanked the Executive Team for helping to bring this to fruition. Trustees thanked JG for taking on the role of Chair of the Elements APRC.**

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	<p><b>Trustees asked if this was the first MAT that VW had been part of.</b> VW explained that she had been part of a MAT earlier in her career whilst working in mainstream but EAT was very different to that. <b>Trustees asked what her reflections were on being part of a MAT after being in the maintained sector.</b> VW noted that it was a revelation, particularly in terms of the level of support that she and her senior team received from the Trust. VW commended RS for the support she provided and stated that being able to call on LC and DB for assistance with HR and financial matters provided a sense of safety. It was good to be part of a team that worked together with shared values.</p> <p><i>KB joined the meeting at 16:21</i></p> <p><b>Trustees thanked RS and VW for their presentation.</b></p> <p><i>RS and VW left the meeting at 16:22</i></p>	
4	<p><b>Executive Summary</b></p> <p>AMO provided the following update:</p> <p><u>Key Celebrations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage – gained a number of awards, three pupils made a successful transition to mainstream high school in Summer 2022 and average value added attendance was 27.24%.</li> <li>• Reach – investment in professional development at senior and middle leadership and gained various awards.</li> <li>• Evolve – supported one member of staff to gain qualified teacher status after joining as an Inclusion Worker and two staff took on Trust-wide roles to lead EDI and Wellbeing.</li> <li>• Ethos College – gained various awards and achieved excellent GCSE outcomes in English and Mathematics.</li> </ul> <p><b>Trustees noted the fantastic work of the academies and how Evolve was being empowered to integrate into the Trust by taking on Trust-wide roles.</b></p> <p><u>Annual SEND Report</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AMO noted that the data looked slightly different in each academy and consistent reporting to enable comparisons across academies was still a work in progress.</li> <li>• A breakdown was given of pupils with an EHCP (education, health and care plan) or on the SEN support register. There were high numbers in some of the academies and most of the need was related to SEMH.</li> <li>• Actions and next steps were identified for some of the academies.</li> </ul> <p><b>Trustees commented that this data brought to life where resources were needed and the differences between academies. They asked if there could be a one-off meeting for lay people who didn't have an educational background to understand the data and put it in context.</b> AMO agreed to do this from January when the new data set would be available.</p>	

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<p><b>Action 4.1: AMO to arrange a one-off information session on data for Trustees with non-educational backgrounds.</b></p> <p><b>Action 4.2: Training on pupil data and curriculum to be built into induction for new Trustees.</b></p> <p><b>Trustees asked how quickly staff gained a sense of emerging need and the changing profile of pupils.</b> AMO noted that she had coached Head Teachers and senior leaders on analysing data and using it to decide on actions required for the next term. AMO was encouraging leaders to use data on a daily and weekly basis regarding attendance, behaviour etc to inform actions. <b>Trustees asked if the data could be used to evidence impact.</b> AMO explained that the work is starting at the analysis stage. DB was chairing a professional network to ensure the correct systems were being used. In some academies the attendance data could be collated quickly to support actions but this was not yet the case across all the academies. As SEND need increased there had been some additional support from the Outreach SEND service. The CEO added that the holistic needs of the pupils were often not known prior to arrival, as it was often difficult to obtain information from the previous school. EAT staff started to assess and address pupil needs, e.g. undiagnosed SEND, in their first few weeks at an EAT academy.</p> <p><b>Trustees asked if the MIS (management information system) was not fit for purpose and if the same system would be adopted Trust-wide.</b> AMO reported that there were various workstreams reviewing MIS; one was looking at systems in other Trusts and seeking their advice on the pros and cons and another group was looking at required data sets and what worked best. The working groups involved Head Teachers and School Business Managers. Work was underway but it would take the full academic year.</p> <p><u>Annual Report on CLA (children looked after)</u></p> <p>Using an existing template from the Key, AMO highlighted the following points from the CLA report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This was a particularly vulnerable cohort.</li> <li>• There was a designated teacher responsible for CLA in each academy with a log of their training.</li> <li>• The number of CLA was listed as of the summer term, including whether they were from the LA or had come from a different LA.</li> <li>• Most CLA had a personalised education plan. The designated CLA teacher, social worker and other agencies would meet regularly to review this.</li> <li>• Basic progress information was included.</li> <li>• Details of CLA with SEND were provided and there was often a big correlation.</li> <li>• Details of CLA with EHCPs were included.</li> <li>• Attendance, persistent absence and suspension data was given.</li> <li>• Interventions for CLA at one of the academies was presented as an example.</li> <li>• Each academy had evaluated their strengths and areas of development for CLA.</li> <li>• The impact of actions would be reviewed annually.</li> </ul>	<b>AMO</b>  <b>CEO</b>
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The Chair noted that the Board had a statutory responsibility to ensure CLA had a designated teacher, their needs were prioritised and their educational outcomes were promoted. This report was an opportunity to highlight the impact of interventions to the Board.

**KB noted that she found AMO's challenge at the Evolve APRC helpful regarding the information provided in the Head Teacher's report and asking the Head to provide information on the curriculum. She also found AMO's role in that Committee helpful to the Head.**

**Trustees noted AMO's role at bringing together pockets of expertise. They suggested using academy resources in a different way and enhancing roles. Trustees praised AMO on her approach to school improvement with the professional networks and sharing of expertise and were impressed with what they had seen to date.**

#### School Improvement Priorities for 2022-23

- AMO presented an overview of the school improvement journey for each academy based on an assurance rating at the end of the summer term provided by the Head Teacher and SLT in dialogue with AMO. This assurance rating was RAG-rated: green = assured, amber = actions in place, red = intervention required.
- The red areas would involve AMO as part of the intervention. A rapid 6-week improvement plan could be used where needed, e.g. for Evolve's leadership capacity and performance.
- KPIs were still missing but will be developed in collaboration with the Heads / other senior leaders throughout the academic year.
- The Head Teachers had asked for SEMH and SEND to be added as further categories to the school improvement overview.
- Each Head Teacher completed a self-evaluation form (SEF) each year with their SLT using the education inspection framework and their judgements were as follows:
  - Engage – good
  - Evolve – requires improvement (RI)
  - Reach – good *[additional information recorded in separate confidential minutes]*
  - Ethos College – outstanding
- Key school performance data – this was still a work in progress but the aim was to present each academy side by side.
- AMO noted that each academy had a different definition of expected progress but this would be standardised on reports from January. Individual targets would be used for academic progress based on the child's starting points and previous academic attainment.
- Serious incidents would also be clearly defined in future, e.g. child posing significant harm to self, peers, staff, school property or causing whole-school disruption, as defined by Team Teach.
- Holistic progress would be included in future to identify barriers to learning and celebrating achievements that were not just academic but included attendance and

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SEMH. A pathway document was being used to track this based on the child's attendance record, home circumstances, special needs etc.

**Trustees acknowledged the huge impact that AMO had had in her short time with the Trust.**

**Trustees asked how the academies within EAT had measured themselves robustly and rigorously against the new Ofsted framework, particularly Ethos College. They commented that gaining an outstanding judgement was perceived to be difficult in the new framework and asked how Ethos College could ensure it was not setting itself up for a disappointment.**

AMO explained that there was a new format to the SEF following a QA (quality assurance) process. It had been evaluated against each section of the education and inspection framework to demonstrate the impact. AMO was confident that Ethos College's SEF process was robust. AMO and the CEO had coached Ethos in the use of language when evaluating themselves against the framework to ensure that they promoted their strengths. The CEO explained that Ethos had rated themselves as good prior to the previous Ofsted but were advised to be aspirational and pitch themselves as outstanding. The CEO believed that the same approach was appropriate this time round.

**Trustees referred to the RAG-rated school improvement table and asked about typical timescales for moving from red to amber or green, thinking particularly about the red areas on Evolve. They asked if AMO was satisfied that progress was still being made.** AMO noted that she had identified significant school improvement work required at Evolve prior to the next Ofsted, which would need further capacity. There was not a set length of time for improving areas from red to amber or green. AMO gave an example of the difficult to engage cohort with complex needs and part-time timetables at Reach Academy. AMO had worked quickly with the leadership team to identify the needs of the pupils and to develop a curriculum to mitigate this. This area moved from red to amber in one term but AMO did not envisage such a quick turnaround in Evolve and this fed into the discussion on the level of school improvement required.

#### Building School Improvement Capacity

- Six strategic professional networks had been established:
  - Safeguarding and attendance
  - SEN
  - Behaviour
  - MIS and data
  - English
  - Mathematics
  - Curriculum, teaching and learning.
- These professional networks were performing deep dives and would become part of the school improvement system. AMO had also identified 25 lead practitioners across the Trust and was inviting them to join in with deep dives. A lead practitioner in another EAT academy had been identified to support Evolve with nurture training.

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- AMO noted the level of school improvement that Evolve needed alongside the support that would be required to bring Springfield on board. Elements had an Executive Head but this was short-term.
- AMO highlighted the need to discuss short, medium and long-term requirements (horizon 1, 2 and 3). Horizon 3 (the next 36-72 months) was a particular point for discussion. AMO noted that her counterparts in other Trusts all knew what their Board's vision was for the number of academies they aimed to have in their MAT and this enabled them to plan school improvement work accordingly.
- AMO proposed the following models for the Board to consider, noting that most school improvement involved a combination of these options:
  - Over recruiting at Assistant Head / Deputy Head level to enable these leaders to provide expertise across the Trust and later move up to be Heads.
  - Full-time / part-time subject leads / school improvement leads
  - Executive Head Teacher layer
  - TLRs (Teaching and Learning Responsibilities) / Honorariums to lead Trust-wide subject areas.
  - Employees in schools with a one day a week Trust-wide role (e.g. Trust Safeguarding Lead, which EAT was currently recruiting to internally).

The Chair encouraged an open discussion to develop a longer-term strategy to address the acute need at Evolve and potentially Springfield and the future impact on new schools and existing provision. She referred to the Schools White Paper on the size of MATs. The Chair suggested that the Board consider timescales and building in capability to address school improvement issues to avoid a fire-fighting situation.

**Trustees noted that the current approach to acquiring new academies was quite reactive based on the CEO receiving a request and suggested there needed to be a strategy for conversion and acquisition with specific criteria, e.g. free schools etc. Trustees suggested building capability and using succession planning to identify members of staff who had the capability and expertise to support with school improvement.** The Chair noted the work AMO was doing on identifying talent within existing teams and the current lack of capacity to use expertise across the Trust without impacting on capacity in existing roles/academies. AMO referred to her discussions with the CEO about onboarding new academies and the work involved in the first year. Even if a new academy came in with a good rating they would not necessarily contribute to Trust-wide expertise in the first year or two. When a school like Springfield came on board significant staffing capacity and expertise was required to bring it up to the required standard. It was difficult to identify current leaders who could support other schools within the Trust, as those who were currently taking on additional responsibilities did not necessarily want to continue with this long-term and Head Teachers would potentially be resistant to capacity being taken from their school in order to support other schools in the Trust. **Trustees suggested that once staff could see how they could have a wider impact across the Trust they may be open to further opportunities in the future.** AMO referred to her experience of employing behaviour specialists in previous academies she had worked in where their salary was covered by trading their services externally.

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	<p><b>Action 4.3: AMO to bring a business case to the next Board meeting for creating specialist roles including the proposed salary.</b></p> <p>AMO noted that in terms of teaching, learning and curriculum capacity schools would already have their own specialists for this and this would not fit within the model of Trust-wide specialists.</p> <p><b>Trustees asked how these roles could be financed.</b> AMO referred to the SENDCO model. Additional SENDCOs had been recruited in Outreach and their expertise had been bought in by other academies within EAT, which covered their salaries. The CEO explained this had come about because there wasn't enough SENDCO capacity within the schools and she had asked Outreach to increase capacity for that purpose.</p> <p>DB noted that the Exec had discussed various funding models and needed to look at this further. There were different ways of managing resources based on the different funding envelopes in the various academies. There may be a need to look at staffing structures in the founding academies.</p> <p><b>Trustees suggested that a new approach was needed and asked AMO what she required in terms of school improvement capacity.</b> AMO proposed a combination of specialist roles, such as behaviour and SEMH specialists, recruitment of additional deputies and revisiting staff structures to see how resources could be used more efficiently and shared across the Trust.</p> <p><b>Trustees asked about talent management and succession planning processes and expressed concern about the idea of over recruiting. They suggested a succession plan was required first and asked if all staff had personal development plans.</b> It was proposed that this be discussed at the next People &amp; Culture Committee meeting.</p> <p><b>Action 4.4: Discuss succession planning at the People &amp; Culture Committee in November – Clerk to add to the agenda.</b></p>	AMO
5	<p><b>Springfield Updates</b></p> <p>The Chair noted that the Executive Team had been working on the next steps for Springfield arising out of the extraordinary Board meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> October and had provided the following information, as agreed, as part of the Board documentation for today's meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organogram of existing roles mapped into the desired structure with identification of new and redundant roles (and associated costs).</li> <li>• An updated financial picture to include the desired staffing model, any school improvement to be funded from the school budget and the contribution to CIF (Capital Improvement Fund) required.</li> <li>• A contingency plan in the event recruitment to the key senior roles was to be unsuccessful.</li> <li>• Desired school improvement resource with associated costs and funding source.</li> <li>• Key dates - milestones and associated risk of slippage.</li> </ul>	Clerk / KB

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*[Discussions and questions about Springfield recorded in separate, confidential minutes]*

*VDG left the meeting at 17:51 and GD took over as Chair.*

*KB left the meeting at 18:04.*

**Resolved:** Trustees agreed to proceed with the acquisition of Springfield on the basis that negotiations between EAT and the LA allowed for a surplus of more than £50k coming into EAT upon conversion and that Springfield would generate an in-year surplus of £60k.

*JG left the meeting at 18:10*

GOVERNANCE

6	<b>Policies &amp; Statutory Documents</b>	
	<p>The following policies had been shared with Trustees prior to the meeting for comments and approval:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Admissions Policy – examples for Evolve (AP) and Elements (special school) had been provided and AMO had provided a summary of differences between the Evolve policy and the other three AP academy policies.</li> <li>• Whistleblowing Policy – this was a Trust-wide policy.</li> <li>• Safeguarding / Child Protection Policy – this was a Trust-wide policy.</li> <li>• SEND Policy and SEND Information Report – example SEND policies for Evolve (AP) and Elements (special school) had been provided and the only differences between the four AP academy policies were the contact details. An example of the SEND Information Report for Ethos College had been provided.</li> </ul> <p><b>Resolved:</b> Trustees approved the Admissions Policies, Whistleblowing Policy, Safeguarding / Child Protection Policy and the SEND Policies, along with the SEND Information Reports.</p> <p><i>Note: the meeting was not quorate at this point but three Trustees had provided approval via email in advance of the meeting and one Trustee provided approval at the meeting meaning that a quorum of Trustees had approved the policies.</i></p>	
7	<b>Meeting Reflections</b>	
	Not discussed.	
8	<b>Any Other Urgent Business</b>	
	<p>Trustees asked about a visit to Elements Academy. The CEO agreed to put Trustees in touch with RS and VW to arrange this.</p> <p><b>Action 8.1: CEO to email RS and VW to thank them for their presentation at today's meeting and to put them in touch with Trustees so that Trustees could arrange an academy visit directly with RS and VW.</b></p> <p>There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 18:15</p>	JF

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<b>9</b>	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>	
	Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> December at 4pm – AGM and meeting of Trustees.	

<b>Action Points</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Completion</b>
• Action 4.1: Arrange a one-off information session on data for Trustees with non-educational backgrounds.	AMO	January 2023
• Action 4.2: Training on pupil data and curriculum to be built into induction for new Trustees.	CEO	Ongoing
• Action 4.3: Bring a business case to the next Board meeting for creating specialist roles including the proposed salary.	AMO	01/12/2022
• Action 4.4: Discuss succession planning at the People & Culture Committee in November – Clerk to add to the agenda.	Clerk / KB	10/11/2022
• Action 8.1: Email RS and VW to thank them for their presentation at today's meeting and to put them in touch with Trustees so that Trustees could arrange an academy visit directly with RS and VW.	CEO	21/10/2022 (completed)

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