

# South Bank Multi Academy Trust

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## Trust Board

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024 9.30am held at Scarcroft Primary School

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Present:	Ian Wiggins	Chair of Trustees
	Rob Bennett	Trustee
	Gemma Lowe	Trustee
	Natalie Wong	Trustee
	Martyn Sibley	Trustee
	Frankie Haynes	Trustee
In attendance:	Michael Gidley	Chief Finance Officer
	Zoe French	Executive Officer
	Katie Dent	Director of HR
	James McGann	Executive Headteacher
	Sophie Triffitt	Clerk to the Board of Trustees

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### **1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND CHANGES TO BUSINESS INTEREST FORMS (PREVIOUSLY ISSUED)**

#### Absence

2.1 Apologies were received and accepted from Donna Smith, Pat Boyle and David O'Brien and the CEO.

2.2 The Chair noted for the minutes that Bethan Ellis had stepped down as a Trustee due to work commitments, but hoped to be involved in the Trust again in future when work commitments allowed.

#### Declarations of Interest

2.3 Trustees were reminded to keep their business interest submissions up to date throughout the year.

### **3 CEO UPDATE** (previously issued)

- 3.1 The Chair highlighted the attendance data and recorded thanks to the central team and staff in schools working hard to deliver significant improvements.
- 3.2 The first meeting of the joint board for Woodthorpe and Scarcroft had taken place and gone positively. The Executive Headteacher explained that as the LGB is reformed they were looking at appointing another Scarcroft general governor representative and operate a joint Vice Chair system. The next meeting will be held at Scarcroft, and a link governor system was being established in line with Ofsted areas and working across both schools.
- 3.3 The Chair noted that it was the first Trust Board meeting since the Look North segment and that he fundamentally disagreed with the MP's representation. Communications had been made to parents and staff which received a number of lovely responses, which had been shared with trustees, with some parents and staff taking action by writing to Look North and the MP.
- 3.4 Martyn Sibley joined the meeting at 9.42am.
- 3.5 The Chair noted that the allegations had been taken seriously and a significant amount of staff time had been spent trying to ascertain what the specific concerns were as the details had not been shared with the school. There was confidence in the school systems and the Chair was assured there is good provision in place.
- 3.6 The Chair explained that assurance around SEND provision comes from:
  - Parent view comments.
  - Immediate positive feedback from a large number of parents and wider community.
  - Data outcomes for SEND.
  - The investment in improving SEND provision over the last 18 months.
- 3.7 The CFO noted that the question raised by the MP in the Houses of Parliament was robustly rebutted by the Education Minister. York High School had a visit from a House of Lords Member and DfE Regional Director to share the good practice and improvements around attendance.
- 3.8 A Trustee recorded confidence that SEND provision has improved significantly over recent years from the reports to the Trust Board and recognised the need to be assured that when there was challenge it should be taken seriously but not to the detriment of the children. They noted significant concern at the amount of public money and time and effort of key leaders being taken away from the main purpose of supporting SEND children .
- 3.9 A Trustee suggested the need to always reflect on continuous improvement, particularly around ongoing communications with key stakeholders.
- 3.10 The CFO confirmed the advice from Impact had been to deliver a consistent message.
- 3.11 The Chair of Trustees made reference to the outgoing Head of Ofsted's comments around an increase in challenging relationships between schools and some parents, and a nationwide trend for parents voicing concerns publicly and not engaging in the complaints process.

- 3.12 The Executive Headteacher explained that SEND support was much wider than just school based provision and also includes a number of agencies outside a school's control, such as children's mental health services. A Trustee noted surprise that the MP had not addressed the wider issue of government funding to schools and associated services.
- 3.13 A Trustee noted the proportion of children with SEND provision and suggested the need to build SEND into the wider communications plan to educate around SEND, what can be delivered, funding and outside services.
- 3.14 The Chair noted that the schools had done a lot to build relationships with the SEND group including a targeted newsletter communication for parents and SEND coffee mornings.
- 3.15 A Trustee queried what the MP was reporting for the specific individuals. The Chair confirmed that the Trustees looked at SEND provision on the learning walk after the Trust Board meeting at Millthorpe on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2023 .
- 3.16 The Executive Headteacher explained that there are issues around SEND in terms of services outside of school/trust control but there was a mindset that schools can always do better. An EHCP / one to one student can have very difficult circumstances and there was a need to communicate the narrative of the South Bank offer and how schools will work with parents to get the best for their children.
- 3.17 A Trustee noted that the topic was understandably emotional for parents and Trust focus should be on delivering for the children and parents. The Director of HR explained the need to encourage parents to engage with schools. The CFO added that the root cause for a number of this group of parents was the Teaching Assistant contract changes and parent perception that their child's key person had been impacted, as well as an incorrect perception that provision had been reduced, which it has not.
- 3.18 A Trustee highlighted there have been no complaints and questioned if the complaint process worked. It was noted that the cases raised in Look North had not been through the complaint process. A Trustee asked if there was an understanding of why parents hadn't engaged with the schools' complaints process and questioned how the Trust engage with parents in a way they need and look at engagement to continuously improve. The Chair was confident that what has been put in place over the last 18 months has put these engagement processes / mechanisms in place, but that it was important to continue to keep these under review.
- 3.19 A Trustee noted that parents have a level of control by nature of the EHCP and right to request reviews.
- 3.20 The Executive Headteacher reported that the Director of SEND and Safeguarding has worked across schools to improve SEND provision including provision mapping and upskilling.
- 3.21 The Chair recorded thanks to staff for the amount of work that had been invested to provide assurance and recognised the significant improvements in the SEND offer across the Trust over the past few years.
- 3.22 The Chair noted that Ofsted are assured on safeguarding measures, the DfE and Regional Director are assured and positive about what is being done, the Millthorpe Ofsted

judgement is currently Good and the self-assessment is Good across the board. The Chair asked the staff team to consider what more could reasonably be done to present that narrative. A Trustee suggested the need for education to the whole community around the SEND offer and to communicate that Millthorpe is a good school.

#### **4 SEND AND SAFEGUARDING UPDATE (previously issued)**

- 4.1 A Trustee asked for clarification of the definition of unkind behaviour. The Executive Headteacher explained that it was behaviours before bullying that schools would want to track to pre-empt potential bullying, inform themes of pastoral work and identify patterns / indication of unmet need. The pastoral teams would review the data and do check ins or PSHE work with a class where needed.
- 4.2 A Trustee noted that it was great to see the trends in data i.e. physical bullying reducing across both secondary schools and had confidence in the data due to the work done by the Director of SEND and Safeguarding on consistency of definitions and tracking.
- 4.3 A Trustee noted a new SENCO NPQ qualification and asked if all SENCOs in the Trust were professionally trained. The Director of HR confirmed that all SENCOs have or are working towards a professional SEND qualification.
- 4.4 The Chair informed the Trust Board that the CEO has committed to all schools in the Trust being assessed for the Inclusion Quality Mark, with Millthorpe being the first school. Director of SEND and Safeguarding has undertaken a SEN audit to start the process. A Trustee suggested the need to discuss the communication and celebration of the IQM if achieved.

#### **5 INSPIRE (previously issued)**

- 5.1 Trustees noted the Inspire update. The Chair explained that the level of scrutiny was being reviewed while it is set up as a standalone provision.
- 5.2 **A Trustee noted that alternative provisions were often challenging environments for staff.** The Director of HR explained that the Director of SEND and Safeguarding was spending a lot of time at the provision and as an accredited Team Teach trainer had delivered training for staff at the conference in December. The Director of HR confirmed that staff wellbeing would be monitored given the added pressures of the environment.
- 5.3 **A Trustee asked for the 'term 1 report' that was not attached.** The Executive Officer confirmed that the SEND Report covered the progress at Inspire.

#### **6 HR UPDATE**

- 6.1 The Director of HR informed the panel that the York High School Headteacher would be retiring at the end of the academic year and the leadership structure would be reviewed. Trustees recognised the great work done by the Headteacher and the need to mark his

retirement. The Chair added that the Chair of Governors also planned to stand down at the end of the academic year.

- 6.2 The Director of HR confirmed that notice had been given to the NYC HR SLA as of the end of March 2024 and capacity is being reviewed.
- 6.3 The Director of HR had attained accredited status as a Safer Recruitment trainer and will offer training externally going forward.
- 6.4 The next JNCC meeting was scheduled for 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024. The Director of HR and CEO met with the NEU rep WC 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024 to discuss collaborative working. The Unions have requested the Trust sign up to the Dying to Work charter and the Director of HR will circulate more information when available.
- 6.5 The Trust Conference took place on the last day of the autumn term and feedback was sought for content at the October conference.
- 6.6 The Director of HR informed Trustees that a staff survey was being developed around priorities for the People Strategy.
- 6.7 The CFO informed Trustees that the Union Facilities Team buy in was under discussion. A Trustee felt it was important to continue with the arrangement. The Finance and Audit Committee Chair noted the need to ensure value for money from any contract / arrangement. If appropriate the Executive Team would present a proposal for trustee consideration.
- 6.8 Trustees asked that the data from the staff survey be reported back to the Trust Board once obtained.

## **7 EDUCATION AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE REPORT**

- 7.1 The Committee Chair highlighted that discussion focused on:
  - Improving attendance trend but work continues.
  - Integrating Persistent Absentees back into learning identified as a challenge.
  - The Director of Personal Development role replaced by two Associate Trust Leads allocated one day per fortnight.
  - New Director of English with an initial focus on Year 11.
  - Inspire update including governance.
  - Science Review found some disparity in primaries that are being addressed and the secondary schools had made significant strides and were working together.
  - RE Review found that enrichment in some schools had not recovered since Covid and RE Leads were working together to ensure equity of opportunity.
  - DT has been identified as an area for development across the Trust including a review of the curriculum offer.
  - LGBs will receive the subject reviews to inform their link governor questioning.
  - Inclusion Quality Mark.
  - Two day Millthorpe Review.
  - Strong programme of CPD.

- Strong ECT CPD in place but not all ECTs were engaging due to directed time so attendance was currently voluntary.
- Checkpoint data identified work to do on PP and SEND outcomes.
- EBACC outcomes and the lower outcomes of the third / open bucket subjects when they tend to be an area where students do well.
- KS2 outcomes reporting better than last year.

## **8 HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- 8.1 A Trustee noted the update on Radon risk management and encouraged the Trust to take a proportional approach towards the risk and supported the ten-year review period. Trustees appreciated the Director of Estates' thorough and robust approach.
- 8.2 The CFO noted that there was a meeting WC 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024 to review the next tranche of School Condition Allocation funding. The funding will be confirmed in April 2024.

## **9 FINANCE UPDATE**

### Monitoring (previously issued)

- 9.1 The CFO highlighted the pressure of agency supply to the budget which will continue to be monitored.

### Risk Register

- 9.2 The CFO had completed a Confederation of School Trusts course on risk assurance and will be developing a top-down approach to risks informed by Trust objectives.

### School Resource Management Self-Assessment (previously issued)

- 9.3 **A Trustee asked for clarification around the Member attendance percentage.**
- 9.4 **Resolution:** Trustees were assured the CFO undertook a robust process and agreed the report for submission to ESFA subject to clarification of the Member attendance.

## **10 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND WORK WITH CITY OF YORK COUNCIL (previously issued)**

- 10.1 The Chair explained that there were collective concerns in the city about the approach of the council towards MATs in the city and differing approaches to key policy areas. South Bank MAT are an important part of education in York and there is a need to work collaboratively with the City of York Council. The Chair asked Trustees for their views on how to develop a strategic approach to engagement with local councillors and the wider relationship with CYC.
- 10.2 In response to a Trustee the Chair explained the structure and responsibility of executives in the council, local councillors and CYC services that schools engage with. In response to communication Martin Kelly, Corporate Director, Children and Education, has offered to meet with the Chair and CEO.

- 10.3 The Chair noted that DfE feedback on the work of the MAT and the Trust's impact on education in York had been positive.
- 10.4 A Trustee questioned what the Trust Board would want the relationship with CYC to be. Trustees agreed there should be a positive relationship to collaboratively work to deliver a strong education offering for the city with a level of support and open dialogue from the LA when the Trust is delivering for the children in the city.
- 10.5 A Trustee referenced the note in the minutes of the public meeting that no one from the Trust attended and noted that that the Trust were invited but felt it was inappropriate for trustees to talk about individual cases in a public forum. The Chair also noted the reporting in the press around the time of the meeting, making untrue allegations about the career history of a senior member of Trust staff, which also factored into the decision not to attend. It was noted again that parents should follow the Trust's complaints process.
- 10.6 The Chair noted that the Trust was accountable to the ESFA, DfE, Health and Safety Executive and Ofsted and are engaging with these organisations. The Trust have looked at all comments, asked for detail where needed and assured themselves.
- 10.7 The Chair felt it was unfortunate that councillors chose to take this approach and that some governors have recorded public abuse in the community. Going forward there was a need to reflect on how the Trust engages in a constructive conversation as a public meeting was not an effective way of addressing the concerns.
- 10.8 A Trustee suggested the need to be assured that everyone has a voice to be used in a constructive way. A Trustee noted that there is communication but answers may not be what an individual wants.
- 10.9 It was agreed that social media and how the Trust protects its volunteers should form part of the induction process.
- 10.10 Trustees reflected on the comments in the minutes about academies in general and agreed they were reflective of some views of the sector as a whole.
- 10.11 Trustees noted the responsibility of the Trust Board to protect Mr Hassack, the role of CEO and the central team from attacks.
- 10.12 **Action:** Chair to communicate with Martin Kelly around positive engagement with the LA.
- 10.13 **Action:** Establish a strategic working group to map Trust engagement strategy. The Director of HR noted that a central team communication strategy meeting was scheduled WC 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024.
- 10.14 A Trustee questioned if there was an opportunity to review the tone of communications to individualise messages. A Trustee added that the tone of voice of the recent message from the Millthorpe Headteacher was excellent.
- 10.15 The Executive Headteacher added that there had been significant development on SEND parent engagement.

## 11 TRUSTEE BUSINESS

### Trustee SEND Link Visit (previously issued)

- 11.1 Trustees noted the visit report. It was clarified that the report should read Carr Junior not Woodthorpe alternative provision.

### Vice Chair and Succession Planning

- 11.2 **Resolution:** Donna Smith was unanimously elected as Vice Chair for a term of one year.
- 11.3 The Chair noted the importance of considering Chair succession planning and that in April 2025 he would have served four years as Chair which was a typical term length in this kind of role. Mr Bennett confirmed that succession planning would form part of the governance review.

### Trustee Code of Conduct (previously issued)

- 11.4 **Resolution:** Trustees agreed the Trustee Code of Conduct subject to proposed change in wording from embarrass to harmful and noted that the Code of Conduct will form part of the governance review.

### Trustee ATGC governance code – acknowledges academy is a separate charity

- 11.5 Mr Bennett explained that the governance code incorporates the seven principles of public life and the charity responsibilities and that it would form part of the governance review.

### Trustee Induction (previously issued)

- 11.6 **Resolution:** Trustees adopted the induction programme noting that it would be kept under review and form part of the governance review.

### Education and Standards Committee Terms of Reference (previously issued)

- 11.7 **Resolution:** Trustees approved the Education and Standards Committee Terms of Reference proposed by the committee.

### Remuneration Committee (previously issued)

- 11.8 **Resolution:** Trustees approved the Remuneration Committee Terms of Reference
- 11.9 **Resolution:** Trustees agreed Remuneration Committee Membership as Ian Wiggins, Francesca Haynes, Martyn Sibley.

### CEO Performance and Pay Review – Framework and Process (previously issued)

- 11.10 **Resolution:** Trustees approved the CEO Performance and Pay Review Framework and Process.

## 12 LGB BUSINESS

### Matters from LGB - Publishing Images of Children (previously issued)

- 12.1 The Chair noted that the discussion and raising to the attention of the Trust Board reflected good governance and provided great challenge.
- 12.2 The Executive Headteacher explained that there were governor concerns around meaningful consent, how a child removing consent is managed as an organisation, potential misuse of the images and the comparison of sharing physical pictures of children outside of the school community and online pictures. The Executive Headteacher explained



the balance between celebrating children in the community against safeguarding a child's image.

12.3 The Executive Team explained that schools follow standard practice in the sector but there were differences in the approach schools within the Trust take.

12.4 Trustees noted the paper and discussed:

- The need to ensure that systems are robust.
- If there was a request to delete personal data of a child could the Trust respond to that. The Executive Officer explained that the DPO would be engaged.
- If there was a difference between images on social media and communications sent to parents.
- The right to be forgotten and if an approach where social media posts are deleted every X months could be implemented.
- Use of images on newsletters as the Trust can't delete that data when not hosting the document / image.
- A graduated consent for newsletters / Class Dojo / social media etc.

12.5 Trustees recorded thanks to the Woodthorpe / Scarcroft governors and asked the Executive Team to obtain advice from the DPO to be discussed at the March Trust Board.

12.6 **Action:** Executive Officer to obtain DPO advice on sharing images of children through various trust communications.

LGB Appointments and Resignations (previously issued)

12.7 There were no appointments for approval.

### **13 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS** (previously issued)

13.1 **Resolution:** The minutes of the 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023 meeting were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and approved.

Matters Arising and Action Plan

13.2 The action plan was updated and completed items removed.

13.3 **Action:** Clerk to add in committee agenda schedule to the agenda plan.

### **14 POLICIES**

Provider Access Policy Millthorpe (previously issued)

14.1 **Resolution:** Trustees approved the Provider Access Policy.

Provider Access Policy York High (previously issued)

14.2 **Resolution:** Trustees approved the Provider Access Policy.

### **15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

15.1 The Chair noted that the March meeting may be rescheduled.

## 16 POST MEETING LEARNING WALK

16.1 Following the meeting trustees went on a learning walk around Scarcroft Primary School.

## 17 FUTURE MEETING DATES (previously issued)

### Trust Board

Monday 11th March 1pm - York High

Monday 20th May 9.30am - Knavesmire

Monday 1st July 1pm - Carr Junior

The meeting closed at 12.22pm.

Meeting Decisions
Trustees approved the School Resource Management Self-Assessment report for submission to the SFA (subject to Member attendance being confirmed).
Donna Smith elected as Vice Chair.
Trustee approved the Code of Conduct.
Trustees adopted the Trustee induction programme.
Trustees approved the Education and Standards Committee Terms of Reference.
Trustees approved the Remuneration Committee Terms of Reference and membership (Ian Wiggins, Francesca Haynes, Martyn Sibley).
Trustees approved the CEO Performance and Pay Review Framework and Process.
Trustees approved the 4 <sup>th</sup> December 2023 meeting minutes.
Trustees approved the Provider Access Policies for Millthorpe and York High.

9<sup>th</sup> October 2023

Item	By	Action	Date
4.8	Dir S&S	Run a SEND session for trustees and governors.	Autumn 2023
9.2	Chair	Write to Chairs of Governors to ask for any potential governor representatives for committees.	Oct 2023
10.1	CEO	Run a trust data system information session for governors after checkpoint 1 data is submitted. <i>04/12/23: Will be scheduled in January 2024 after checkpoint 1.</i>	Jan 2024

29<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Item	By	Action	Date
10.12	Chair	Communicate with Martin Kelly around positive engagement with the LA.	Feb 2024
10.13	Chair / F Haynes	Establish a strategic working group to map Trust engagement strategy.	1 <sup>st</sup> Mar 2024
12.6	Exec Officer	Obtain DPO advice on sharing images of children through various trust communications.	1 <sup>st</sup> Mar 2024
13.3	Clerk	Clerk to add in committee agenda schedule to the agenda plan.	Complete

***Approved at Trust Board on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024.***

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**Trust Board Approval**

APPROVED