



**RICHARD HUISH TRUST
BOARD MEETING**

Monday 25th September 2023 at 5.00pm

Rowan House Committee Room

- Present:** Jade Renville (Chair)
Catherine Christie (Vice Chair)
Dan Maycock
Clare Greenslade
Karen Wedlake
Pat Flaherty – via Teams
- In attendance:** John Abbott (CEO)
Paul Lonsdale (CFO)
Steve Chattell (CPO)
Richard Gill (External Adviser)
John Wells (External Adviser)
Lisa Webber (Headteacher, Pyrland School)
Roz Abbott (MIS Manager)
Richard Anderson (IT & Facilities Director)
- Clerk:** Helen Wells

MINUTES

- | | | Action |
|----------------------|--|---------------|
| RHT
23/01 | 1. MEETING FORMALITIES
1.1 Welcome and apologies for absence
The chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and made introductions. There were apologies for absence from Tim Duffen and Gareth Jones. It was noted Pat Flaherty would be joining the meeting as soon as possible. The meeting was quorate. | |
| RHT
23/02 | 1.2 Minutes of the last meeting
The minutes of the last meeting held on 11 th July 2023 were agreed as an accurate record. The Chair agreed to her electronic signature being used to sign them off. | |
| RHT
23/03 | 1.3 Matters arising
Directors discussed the matters arising paper and agreed they were either all completed or were satisfied they were in progress and had been brought forward to this meeting or a relevant committee. | |
| RHT
23/04 | 1.4 Declarations of interest
Directors confirmed that the summary declarations of interest for publication on the website were accurate and no declarations of interest were declared for this meeting. | |
| | 2. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENTS | |
| RHT
23/05 | 2.1 Academies update
The headteacher gave an overview of results at Pyrland for 2022/23. Results overall were lower than hoped but in line with what was broadly anticipated. | |
| RHT
23/06 | Directors acknowledged that the results need to be taken in the context of the broader school improvement plan that is still within its early days. Directors noted that whilst they need to scrutinise the results and outcomes, these are only part of what is important. | |
| RHT
23/07 | How do the results compare to national outcomes?
Nationally the results are higher than Pyrland's. The headteacher working on as an improvement action. | |

Signed:.....Jade Renville..... Date:.....7th December 2023.....

- RHT 23/08** **How much of the overall profile of results, in retrospect, was expected?**
The headteacher confirmed this was expected, but the predicted grades were an area to improve.
- RHT 23/09** **What is being done about the accuracy of predicted grades?**
The headteacher, along with her new deputy headteacher, have formulated a detailed focus on working out how these predictions are made and to support those who are making them.
- RHT 23/10** **Are there any themes that you can identify as root causes to the outcomes last year?**
There are a number of factors. Maths and English decreased and are therefore a focus moving forward. SEND results were more positive than anticipated, reflecting the impact of the work since the Ofsted inspection. Unfortunately, the Pupil Premium (PP) gap has grown again this year and will therefore be a focus next year. PP can be a complex area to address as the needs are so differentiated between students relating to their individual needs.
- RHT 23/11** The headteacher tabled a paper giving an overview of the school's improvement plan. The plan includes how it is cross-referenced to the Ofsted areas for improvement from their last visit and the conditions from the Regional Director's (RD) termination warning notice.
- RHT 23/12** JW commented that he first visited the school in October 2022. At the time the school was in a challenging position. Since that time the main foci have been to address behaviour, staffing and culture. Work has also been undertaken on the school environment, to show that the school cares about the students. As outcomes are key, the first visit this year has focused on outcomes, looking at where year 11s are. Attendance is also key along with teaching and learning and PP students.
- RHT 23/13** The Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) needs some specific measurable milestones so that there can be evidence of impact demonstrated. He is trying to get momentum in this first time which he sees as critical particularly for current year 11s.
- RHT 23/14** RG corroborated the overview by JW, but urged the leadership to ensure that the milestones are sharp and specific so that the lines of accountability are clear; the only way to do this is with a clear trajectory to show that things are going in the right direction.
- RHT 23/15** Current Y11, Y10 and Y9 are crucial to the school improvement plan, there should be an upward trajectory; their outcomes need to be comparable to national outcomes.
- RHT 23/16** **Subject to the milestones/smart objectives is the school heading in the right direction with the QIP, or are there any gaps?**
JW responded that the principles are sound and build on what was achieved last year, the headteacher has shown real resilience and has made some good appointments for new leadership. There needs to be more directive leadership to ensure consistency across the school, so that standards are clearly set.
- RHT 23/17** The headteacher agreed with JW, noting that her job has changed significantly from being reactive to day-to-day challenges to be more directive as a strategic leader. As a result, there has been a substantial improvement in behaviour, particularly for those who were wandering corridors between lessons. Now that attendance at class is better the teaching and learning can improve and this needs to be the big focus simultaneously with outcomes and data.
- RHT 23/18** The headteacher described her commitment to enrichment; to help children spark interests in exploring the world further, such as residential trips and will help with the culture and aspirations. Directors noted that the school's social media profile is extremely positive and is reflected in the applications for this year. She acknowledged that she is accountable for the outcomes but that it is part of a much bigger journey for the school and getting the culture and

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ethos right is critical. Directors echoed this and agreed that many factors are interlinked in terms of the success of the school and that the feeder schools within Huish are linked up and connected at different phases.

RHT 23/19 **How are directors going to be reassured this term, and at key regular points during the year, about the progress of the school?**

The CEO noted that Academic Performance and Quality (AP&Q) Committee has worked with the local governing board (LGB) to support in scrutinising the QIP. The milestones will be regularly reviewed by the headteacher with support of JW, there are three check points during the year. JW offered support for the leadership through governance this year to help ensure the accountability line for the school leaders around the QIP.

RHT 23/20 Directors noted some of the measures and outcomes will be both quantitative and qualitative and that these will both be measured but some are therefore harder to evidence than others. The headteacher noted it is important to find meaningful ways of proving things, but that the most stringent accountability is from the data.

RHT 23/21 **The Ofsted and RD letter have a significant amount for the school to focus on. How as a leadership team, are you ensuring you are not taking your eye of the ball for things that were reported as satisfactory?**

Some areas for improvement were addressed quite quickly and are resolved, the big push this year is the overall quality of education, this are not driven the by the Ofsted framework as this must be right for the school.

RHT 23/22 **There is a lot of reliance being placed upon the role of the LGB in scrutinising and supporting the QIP, do RG and JW's role extend to the effectiveness of the LGB?**

The CEO responded that this was part of the rationale for changing the approach for AP&Q. The first meeting in the new approach this year has highlighted a number of inconsistencies, but there is now an approach in place as a result. If directors wish to see the progress of the school for themselves they will shortly be invited to visit.

PF joined the meeting at 5.45pm

LW, JW, RG left the meeting at 5.48pm, the chair thanked them for attending.

RHT 23/23 **What does success look like beyond the obvious data and inspection outcomes; what are the key metrics in determining the school is heading in the right direction that can be monitored through the year by directors?**

The CEO noted the tabled overview of the improvement plan with clear tangible objectives and milestones. There will be further strategic level data available from the Bromcom system now its use is becoming better established.

RHT 23/24 **What are the key benchmarks that are going to be used to measure progress against?**

This is a growing area of focus for the headteacher and new DHT, to address how predictions are arrived at. This will be detailed within the school improvement plan that will help inform directors when they will want to receive updates and reports on the progress of the school, and they would expect to see this alongside the LGB minutes. Directors noted that having an understanding of the staffing profile at the school would be useful; to understand how much of a risk this continues to be.

ACTION: Provide the latest QIP for Pyrland at future board meetings, including an overview of staffing at Pyrland.

**Clerk/
CPO**

RHT 23/25 Directors discussed the use of a dashboard approach to give high level overview to give a level of comfort of the profile and trajectory of the school if further reassurance is needed in

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particular areas. The LGB should be doing this at this level of detail, but directors voiced that they want to have a more detailed level of visibility.

RHT
23/26

Directors summarised that it was a helpful update and that they would want to continue to receive updates directly from RG and JW, plus updates from assurance from the LGB perhaps with another narrative and the metrics to have a balance to have the visibility of Pyrland and the other schools.

ACTION: Invite LW, RG and JW to future board meetings this year to give updates on progress being made at Pyrland School. Clerk

RHT
23/27

Overview of results for primary schools

The CEO gave an overview of the results for the primary schools, noting that the council have produced data to help rank schools in Somerset, the combined performance at KS2 is within the top quartile for Somerset and is a helpful indicator that primaries are performing well in the local context.

RHT
23/28

Overview of the college results

The college results remain excellent, despite issues with being able to benchmark effectively, but the A-Level comparison is strong in terms of attainment. The progress related benchmarking tools shows some variation across courses, but the results are strong overall.

RHT
23/29

Growth of Huish

The CEO noted that following the RD letter confirming they are satisfied improvements are being made at Pyrland School, conversations are now underway with other schools who are interested in joining Huish.

RESOLVED: Directors resolved that they are in support of West Coker Primary School applying to join Huish.

RHT
23/30

Bromcom overview

The MIS Manager gave an overview on screen of the new MIS system that has been introduced over the last year across all the schools. It is cloud based and students and parents have access to a dashboard led dataset in an interactive way. There is a MAT level of software 'MAT Vision' which allows users to drill down into data as far as is needed. There has been a process of data standardisation; the benefits of this will be seen this year with the primary assessments. Each school has own personalised MIS system and have access to various dashboards. The MAT Vision gives summary data across all schools that can be compared to benchmarks.

RHT
23/31

Does data go to the LGB so they can interrogate it?

Not at the moment as they are focused on the new QIPs. LGBs will monitor impact of the QIPs through the data outputs from the system.

RHT
23/32

Would it include standards data?

It will include this so that it can be seen across the primaries.

RHT
23/33

Are the schools all using the same tools to collect data?

This is now consistent across all of the schools.

RHT
23/34

Will the schools get complacent of their outcomes as they are demonstrated within the trust?

Depending on the particular area of curriculum there is some external validation of the academic standards, this is sought through third party verification.

RHT
23/35

Is the most being made of Bromcom?

There is much more it can do and deliver. A key focus now is to ensure that the data it holds is the single version of the truth and to make sure that it is being used in a consistent way across the group. The system is not a way to hold schools to account but to stimulate discussion that helps improvement. Moving away from SIMs has been a significant challenge across the group, but the impetus is growing now and the benefits of using the system correctly are starting to be seen. It has been a huge help for Pyrland in monitoring behaviour, as well as staff absence monitoring by HR.

RHT
23/36

Is there visibility for the trust board to have an overview on an ongoing basis?

Directors agreed that it would be useful to revisit this at a future meeting.

ACTION: Propose how directors will have visibility of the data from Bromcom in the future. CEO

RHT
23/37

2.2 Strategic Plan 2023-2027

The CEO noted the final draft of the strategic plan is to be circulated to the sub-committees for more detailed scrutiny.

ACTION: Ensure the strategic plan is reviewed at forthcoming committees for final review ahead of approval at the next board meeting in December. Clerk

RHT
23/38

2.3 Update from Members Quarterly General Meeting in September 2023

The chair updated the board that at the last General Meeting Members agreed they want assurance that directors are being held to account regarding the progress of Pyrland School against the conditions laid out by the RD in the termination warning notice. It was agreed that directors will be presenting a summary of the points of assurance, this has already been started by the headteacher with independent assurance from JW/RG.

3. GOVERNANCE

RHT
23/39

3.1 SEND Monitoring Report

PF gave a summary of the monitoring activity of SEND he undertook at the end of the last academic year to provide assurances to the Board, in his role as SEND Lead Director for Huish. He highlighted that:

- the code of practice is key to align activities against at the schools;
- role of the SENCO is critical and their voice needs to be heard;
- the report does not assess the compliance with the regulations;
- useful to share the SEND code of practice among directors to gain an understanding of the complexity of the regulations schools have to work with;
- SENCOs only meet once a term, there may be opportunity to give more support and supervision for what can be a challenging role;
- a forum for SENCOs to share expertise and good practice is important of what can be a daunting area for those who are new to it;
- when there are changes in personnel, directors might wish to seek assurances that the right people are in place;
- assurance might be wanted for directors that Huish is compliant with the code for SEND;
- SEND is a huge area of growth for all local councils for which there is very limited funding, those with SEND are often advocated to remain in mainstream schools and what the longer-term strategy is for Huish to deal with this and the growing complexity of operating an effective system in this area.

The chair thanked PF for his report which she noted is very informative.

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RHT 23/40 **What do the executive team consider regarding the suggestions contained in the report?**

The CEO noted that they agree with the findings of the report and appreciate how informative it is. The suggestions will be acted upon, but in ways appropriate to each one depending on the complexity and resource needed to address the items.

RHT 23/41 **The suggestion that the trust approach the local authority (LA) regarding SEND, is this an area that can be explored?**

The CFO noted that this area of dialogue has already started where there have been a number of SEND related issues at specific schools. The LA team have agreed to undertake a review of one of the schools to look at how the Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP) process is determined at the school and whether it is appropriate. A broader discussion is also underway regarding the assumption the council make on allocating General Annual Grant (GAG) funding and how it is used in detail, the notional SEN funding should be able to be spent on all those who have SEN at the school and not just those students who have an EHCP.

RHT 23/42 **Will the impact of the impending bankruptcy of the council impact this?**

The council are looking to increase the education budget share that is ring-fenced for supported learning. There are massive increases in demand and costs but a huge budget saving activity across all departments at the council. The dialogue with senior leaders is positive at the moment. Directors discussed how assurances relating to SEND will be kept under review moving forwards. They voted that the Governance Committee should be tasked with oversight in this area.

RESOLVED: The board agreed that the Governance Committee should have oversight for how the recommendations are being acted upon.

ACTION: Add oversight of SEND as a responsibility to the terms of reference for the Governance Committee when it is next reviewed. Ensure it is added to the business planning schedule for future meetings. Clerk

ACTION: Executive Team to report back to the Governance Committee (Summer term meeting) to give an overview of the formal actions to address and implement suggestions arising from the SEND review report. CEO

RHT 23/41 **3.2 Diversity of RHT Board overview**

The Governance Specialist (Clerk) gave an overview of the diversity indicators, which signal that the diversity of the board is useful to know they are broadly in line with the diversity of the local community. Directors agreed that they were happy with the wording being used to describe their diversity and that it complied with GDPR.

ACTION: Publish diversity monitoring summary outcomes on the Huish website. Clerk

RHT 23/42 **3.3 Safeguarding monitoring arrangements for 2023/24**

The CPO confirmed that the safeguarding monitoring arrangements would be in place in the same format as last year and that LGBs had been reminded how to proceed with this ready for the next collation exercise through the October half term, this will be quality assured and presented to the board as a paper at the next meeting. The monitoring form has been updated to reflect the latest developments in the KCSiE.

RHT 23/43 **3.4 Code of Conduct for directors– annual consent**

The clerk noted that this paper had been included to remind directors of the content of the annual code of conduct but that this year, and in future years, they will be able to confirm consent to abide by it via the Safelog system.

RHT
23/44

3.5 Policy review schedule

The clerk noted that this is the schedule that has been recently overhauled and is now overseen by her to ensure that directors review key documents at appropriate times via the relevant committee. The publication requirements of documents are included to ensure that, once approved, documents are published in the agreed manner, or are held for internal use as appropriate. Directors noted it was pleasing to receive assurances that detailed monitoring is in place and noted how it links to the policy guidance already in place for academies.

RHT
23/45

3.6 LGB Governor appointments and updates

Directors reviewed the recommended appointments listed in the paper and noted the latest updates regarding governors.

RHT
23/46

The board noted that director, Karen Wedlake is stepping down as a director but would be happy to take up a governor role at an LGB. The board thanked Karen for her contribution and welcomed her as a governor.

RESOLVED:

- Karen Wedlake to transfer from being a director to a governor at Nerrols Primary School, subject to LGB approval.
- Wendy Devereux approved for a second term of office at Nerrols and to remain as chair.
- Kerry Palmer-Roberts approved as chair of governors at West Buckland.
- Naomi Blatchley ratified as vice chair of governors at West Buckland.
- Gillian Slocombe approved as chair of governors at North Curry.
- Jacqui Atherley ratified as vice chair of governors at North Curry.
- Matt Bernard (noted as being the DHT at Pyrland) approved as a governor at Nerrols, subject to LGB approval.

RHT
23/47

Directors discussed the weighting of members of staff who are governors at Pyrland School, noting that they wished to receive further information about the composition of existing governors at the school before considering whether any further members of staff should be permitted to join the LGB. The CEO described that the Scheme of Delegated Authority (SoDA) currently limits the employed staffing composition but that it is open to interpretation, this will be refined. Directors indicated that having the external perspective and challenge remains very important.

ACTION: Provide further information to the board about the current composition of the LGB at Pyrland School subject to considering any further members of staff from within the group joining it.

CEO

RHT
23/48

Directors agreed that Matt Kerton (headteacher at Nerrols) could attend the Pyrland LGB in the capacity of an observer/adviser until such time as him potentially joining as a governor is considered.

4. FINANCIAL MATTERS AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR INTERNAL CONTROL

RHT
23/49

4.1 Management Accounts – July 2023

Directors noted the management accounts for July.

The end of year accounts are currently underway, it is generally a positive profile across Huish, with the outturn position having improved. Cumulative reserves compared to the 1/12th target overview given by the CFO – the summary will be circulated to directors.

RHT
23/50

What happens where they have exceeded the target?

This will be discussed with the school to look at how this will be invested back into the school.

Signed:.....Jade Renville..... Date:.....7th December 2023.....

RHT 23/51 **4.2 Strategic Risk Register final review 2022-23**
Directors noted the risk register for information, which is broadly going in the right direction and is being monitored closely, which has been scrutinised at the A&R committee in some detail already and the committee will continue the programme of schools attending to present an overview of their risks.

RHT 23/52 **4.3 Estates and facilities update**
This followed item 4.4. The Facilities and IT Director confirmed that formal confirmation has now been given that the Huish estate has no RAAC but has highlighted some other areas to address within the estate that will be included in the plan for addressing the facilities. Pyrland is pending the survey from the DfE to be confirmed as received.

RHT 23/53 The windows and doors projects, heating and hot water projects have been completed but others are now at various stages with carbon decarbonisation funding. A bid is being looked at to look at further investment in replacing boilers and related areas for heating supply. The funding is based on the condition survey performed by the government on an annual basis. The funding must be spent within 2 years of it being allocated. There is a risk that funding could be reduced if the overall calculation for the estate changes.

RHT 23/54 **Are the works prioritised on the school condition survey when the college joined the trust?**
It is closely aligned to this survey, but there have been some challenges along the way with how activities are prioritised in relation to emerging unpredicted need where expensive systems fail unexpectedly; keeping a contingency is important. The funding model is being looked at what schools should be budgeting for as general maintenance and what is being covered for more significant projects.

RHT 23/55 **Are contractors approached based on trust-wide need?**
Yes; this creates economies of scale.

RHT 23/56 **4.4 ATH Compliance tracker – final review 2022-23**
This followed item 4.2. Directors noted the compliance tracker, of which is the first iteration, this will be built upon and has been a useful exercise to complete in case of future external review. This has also been scrutinised by audit and risk. The only item highlighted as incomplete is pending completion within the formalities of year-end activities. Directors noted that this is a very useful document and provides assurance of key compliance areas.

5. MINUTES

RHT 23/57 **5.1 Minutes from recent Trust Board Committees**
Directors noted the minutes from the recent Audit & Risk Committee meeting.

RHT 23/58 **5.2 Minutes from recent Local Governing Boards**
Directors noted the minutes from recent LGB meetings.

6. POLICIES AND OTHER MATTERS OF NOTE

RHT 23/59 **6.1 Ofsted Report for Lyngford Park**
Directors noted the report and the 'Good' outcome.

RHT 23/60 **6.2 Risk Management Policy**
RESOLVED: APPROVED

- RHT 23/61 6.3 Critical Incident Management and Business Recovery/Continuity Plan
RESOLVED: APPROVED**
- RHT 23/62 6.4 Admissions policy (RHT)
RESOLVED: APPROVED**
- RHT 23/63 6.5 Policy summary**
Directors noted the policy summary.
- RHT 23/64 6.6 Stress Management Policy
RESOLVED: APPROVED**
- RHT 23/65 6.7 Pay Policy**
The CPO highlighted that a significant change in the policy is the move introduce a consistent cross-trust approach to managing and reviewing pay awards. The recommendation is to introduce a Headteacher Pay Review board, to be made up by the headteachers, chaired by the CPO with a bespoke terms of reference for the committee. This will help with standardisation of approach and a fair and equitable approach across the trust.
RESOLVED: APPROVED
- RHT 23/66 6.8 Grievance Procedure
RESOLVED: APPROVED**
- RHT 23/67 6.9 Expenses Policy
RESOLVED: APPROVED**
- RHT 23/68 6.10 Handling of DBS Certificates Policy
RESOLVED: APPROVED**
- RHT 23/69 6.11 Recruitment of ex-offenders Policy
RESOLVED: APPROVED**
- RHT 23/70 6.12 Equal Opportunities in Employment Policy
RESOLVED: APPROVED**
- RHT 23/71 6.13 Capability Policy
RESOLVED: APPROVED**
- RHT 23/72 6.14 Disciplinary Procedure
RESOLVED: APPROVED**
- RHT 23/73 6.15 Gifts & Hospitality Policy
RESOLVED: APPROVED**
- RHT 23/74 6.16 Safer Recruitment Policy & Procedure
RESOLVED: APPROVED**
- RHT 23/75 6.17 Staff Code of Conduct
RESOLVED: APPROVED**
- RHT 23/76 6.18 Absence Policy and Procedure
RESOLVED: APPROVED**
- RHT 23/77 6.19 Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
RESOLVED: APPROVED**

Signed:.....Jade Renville..... Date:.....7th December 2023.....

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

**RHT
23/78**

7.1 Mandatory training for directors

The clerk reminded directors of the need to complete the mandatory training relating to safeguarding, cyber security, equality and diversity and GDPR on the Safelog system. She noted that if equivalent courses have been completed elsewhere directors can provide the certificates to evidence this is. She noted that there are also a number of key RHT documents that must be confirmed as read on the system.

**RHT
23/79**

7.2 Consideration of confidential content of the minutes

The clerk asked directors to consider if any of the discussions held, or papers shared that are not already confidential should be marked as such. Directors agreed that that paper about diversity of the board should remain confidential.

**RHT
23/80**

7.3 Items for the next meeting

The draft agenda content for the next meeting, taken from the agreed annual business planning tool, were noted.

**RHT
23/81**

7.4 Next meeting dates

Dates of the next meeting were noted.

The chair thanked everyone for attending.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 7.33pm