RICHARD HUISH TRUST
BOARD MEETING

5th December 2024 at 5.00pm

Room M5, Richard Huish College and via MS Teams

Directors Present: Jade Renville (Chair)
Catherine Christie (Vice Chair) – via Teams
Dan Maycock
Tim Duffen – via Teams
Dominic Lynch
Olivia Salaman – via Teams
John Abbott (CEO)

In attendance: Paul Lonsdale (CFO)
Steve Chattell (CPO)
Richard Anderson (Director of IT & Facilities)
Jo James (Interim HT at Pyrland School) – via Teams
Simon Faull (CoG Kingsbury Episcopi Primary School)

Clerk: Helen Wells (Governance Specialist)

MINUTES

1. MEETING FORMALITIES **Action**

This item followed item 2.

RHT 24/50 **1.1 Welcome and apologies for absence**
The chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and made introductions. There were apologies for absence from directors Pat Flaherty, Victoria Harrison, Clare Greenslade and MIS Manager Roz Abbott. The meeting was quorate.

1.2 Minutes of the last meeting
RHT 24/51 The minutes of the last meeting held on 26th September 2024 were agreed as an accurate record. The Chair agreed to her electronic signature being used to sign them off.

1.3 Matters arising
RHT 24/52 Directors discussed the matters arising paper and agreed all items had been completed, with the exception of one that will be resolved when the Equality & Diversity Policy is next reviewed.

1.4 Declarations of interest
RHT 24/53 Directors confirmed that the summary declarations of interest for publication on the website were accurate, noting where updated declaration sheets were still pending from directors.
No declarations of interest were declared for this meeting.

2. **STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENTS**

2.1 Strategic update

This was taken as the first item

RHT 24/54 The CEO outlined the discussions that have been underway with Kingsbury Episcopi Primary School to potentially pursue a formal relationship with Huish. The school's Chair of Governors, Simon Faull, was in attendance to give an overview of the school. The school is currently rated 'Good' by Ofsted, with 5 classes. The main building is Victorian and houses three classes including the pre-school and three temporary classrooms that have been in-situ for some time. Recent SAT results are well above average. There are excellent resources; they benefit from a large outdoor area which includes a heated outdoor swimming pool. Students are engaged and enjoy their learning at the school. As with many schools, the budget is a challenge. The intake has changed more recently to include more children with complex and challenging issues. **What are the demographics looking like into the future?** The school is unlikely to grow, but numbers are expected to remain stable. **What is the Local Authority's (LA) take on the deficit budget?** There has been no significant change with the LA's approach. **Is the leadership team stable?** The headteacher has been in place for the last 3 years.

RHT 24/55 The school have been considering academisation for some time. Other trusts that have been investigated did not marry with the ethos and culture of the school. The chair summarised the importance of the establishing of a meaningful relationship which values each of the member schools.

RHT 24/56 **How well shared is the view of academising with Huish across the key stakeholders at Kingsbury?**
Governors recently met and they voted to proceed with joining Huish. The CEO has met with some of the staff and answered questions, but everybody recognises this is a positive move. Parents have not yet been consulted.

RHT 24/57 **What are the three key areas that Kingsbury would seek support from Huish?**
Support would ideally include the school to focus on the quality of teaching, learning and education is critical to them. Whilst the quality of teaching and learning is good, they want to enable this to be maximised. Support in terms of finance, HR, tapping into the potential of the pre-school would be a priority.

RHT 24/58 **What are the plans for the deficit recovery?**
The LA are focusing on the recovery over the next financial school year, there is not a definitive date for the repayment to be made.

RHT 24/59 **Is there a plan to grow the numbers on roll at the school?**
There is currently no plan to actively grow numbers, but the pre-school provides an opportunity to do so.

The Chair thanked Simon Faull for attending.
Simon Faull left the meeting.

RHT 24/60 Directors considered and discussed the presentation from the school, including thoughts on how well-placed Huish are to deliver support and the potential for growth of the school in the future. Directors discussed potential timeframes, barriers and the mechanics of the process of establishing a stronger relationship. Directors drew parallels with other primary schools that have joined Huish over the years, how Huish has worked to support them, and the positive impact Huish has made.
RESOLVED: Directors resolved that they would welcome an application from Kingsbury Episcopi Primary School to join Huish.

Signed:…*Jade Renville*………………………………………….. Date:…24/02/2025…………………………

RHT 24/61 The CEO then presented a wider ranging strategic update referring to a presentation available to directors. This included an update on potential for growth, the development of the new DfE Regions Group, funding for school improvement and new teachers, priorities around attendance an inclusion and the RISE (Resilience in Schools and Education) teams to raise standards for all schools.

2.2 Progress against Strategic Driver 2

RHT 24/62 Strategic Driver 2: Further develop partnership and collaboration within, across and beyond Huish.

The paper was noted and updates discussed. Directors considered areas within the driver that have not made as much progress including forging closer links with businesses and how this could be further developed.

3. GOVERNANCE AND PEOPLE

This item followed item 1.

3.1 Headteacher/Principal Performance Management Objectives 2024/2025 and pay awards

RHT 24/63 The CPO gave an overview of the process and objectives that have been agreed for headteachers.

The chair and vice chair confirmed that the pay awards have been scrutinised rigorously by the Governance & People (G&P) Committee at their recent meeting. Directors discussed updates to the recommendations since the committee and agreed they were happy and assured with the rationale for these.

RESOLVED: Directors approved the pay awards of the headteachers/principal.

3.2 Pay awards

RHT 24/64 The CPO noted updates since the G&P Committee scrutinised the recommendations for pay awards to the upper pay scales, directors agreed they were happy with the proposals.

RESOLVED: Directors approved the recommendations for upper pay scale awards.

3.3 Safeguarding update

RHT 24/65 The CPO gave an update summarising that there are no concerns from any of the schools through the monitoring process in relation to safeguarding. A full report will be circulated to directors shortly.

ACTION: **Share the full autumn safeguarding report with directors as soon as it becomes available.** **Clerk**

3.4 LGB Chair and Governor appointments and updates

RHT 24/66 The Clerk summarised the latest updates and recommendations for appointment for roles to the LGBs, directors noted the updates and discussed the recommendations for appointment and reappointment.

RESOLVED: Directors approved the recommendations for appointment/reappointment to the LGBs as listed in the accompanying paper.

Signed:…*Jade Renville*………………………………………….. Date:…24/02/2025…………………………

4. FINANCIAL MATTERS AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR INTERNAL CONTROL

4.1 Oversight Report including Management Accounts – September and October

This followed item 2.1

Jo James (JJA) attended as interim headteacher in place of the headteacher, Lisa Webber.

RHT 24/67 The chair noted the work undertaken has been significant at Pyrland, highlighting the ongoing scrutiny, challenges and progress made by school and expressed her sincere thanks on behalf of the board for the progress made.

RHT 24/68 JJA expressed her thanks to the central team for their support and guidance during this period. The support from external consultant John Wells have increased to a weekly basis at this time. Richard Gill's monitoring visits have continued on a termly basis, the focus has changed for now to a mentoring supportive role. This has enabled the school to continue to make progress with their improvement priorities, of which an overview was given.

The chair confirmed that the board remained supportive of the school and the approach being taken.

RHT 24/69 **What are you most proud of?**
The opportunities that the students get now and are comparable with any other school in the local area. It feels like there is more joy in the school; students feel happy and develop a sense of belonging as a result the wider offer that is now available.

The chair thanked JJA for attending the meeting.

JJA left the meeting.

RHT 24/70 Directors discussed the current challenges facing the school and interim leadership team.

RHT 24/71 The CFO noted key points within the Oversight Reports for September and October, including Management Accounts. The October report reflects the impact of the pay award and projections about the pending pay award for the college. The September report also included some key data and broader information that provides a wider contextual illustration for directors. Directors queried the days lost in relation to suspension and exclusions, the CEO confirmed he will seek further information about this and will circulate. Directors noted that the primary attendance rates remain very strong.

4.2 Members Report including annual accounts, financial statements, management letter and Key Issues for Discussion Document (KIDD)

This followed item 3.4.

RHT 24/72 The CFO noted that the report has been through a robust review process and has been scrutinised by the joint Audit & Risk with Finance & General Purposes Committee on 28th November.

Tim Duffen left the meeting; the meeting remained quorate.

RHT 24/73 The CFO noted some key points from the report and explained the issues raised in the Key Issues for Discussion Document (KIDD). Directors agreed that the process of reviewing and scrutinising the report and supporting documentation had been thorough. Directors noted the Going Concern paper, observing it is a useful and thorough document.

RESOLVED: Directors resolved to APPROVE the Members Report for 2023/2024, the Chair and Accounting Officer consented for their signatures to be added electronically

Signed:…*Jade Renville*………………………………………….. Date:…24/02/2025…………………………

to the report and supporting documentation as appropriate, including the letter of representation.

4.3 Accounting Officer (AO) Checklist

RHT 24/74 Directors noted the AO checklist, observing there are no issues raised. The AO confirmed his electronic signature could be used to ratify the document.

4.4 Audit review report

RHT 24/75 Directors noted the internal audit report, noting that there have been no significant issues raised. The CFO confirmed the audit tracking document will be updated to include the outcomes from this report.

4.5 Internal auditor appointment

RHT 24/76 Directors noted this had been discussed in detail at the recent joint committee, including considerations of the process for appointment.

RESOLVED: Griffin were reappointed as the internal auditor.

5. MINUTES

RHT 24/77 **5.1 Minutes from recent Trust Board Committees**

Directors noted the recent minutes from the Trust Board Committees.

RHT 24/78 **5.2 Minutes from recent Local Governing Boards (LGBs)**

Directors noted the minutes from recent LGB meetings.

6. POLICIES AND OTHER MATTERS OF NOTE

6.1 Financial Regulations

RHT 24/79 The Financial Regulations were recommended for approval by the Finance & General Purposes (F&GP) Committee at their meeting on 16th October 2024.

RESOLVED: APPROVED

RHT 24/80 **6.2 Admissions arrangements 2026/2027**

Directors noted the minor updates to the document

RESOLVED: APPROVED

RHT 24/81 **6.3 Pay Policy**

Directors noted this had been reviewed by the recent G&P Committee.

RESOLVED: APPROVED

RHT 24/82 **6.4 Sexual Harassment Policy**

Directors noted this was a new policy and discussed why this is now best placed as a standalone policy. The CPO confirmed that this is response to a change in the law to create a culture where sexual harassment does not occur. Directors discussed some points of the wording in the policy about action taken upon reporting of potential harassment. Directors discussed how it is important to achieve a balance that is reflective of Huish's culture and ethos.

RESOLVED: APPROVED subject to re-wording of 8.1

ACTION: Re-word section 8.1 in the Sexual Harassment Policy to address how potential harassment is reported. **CPO**

RHT 24/83 **6.5 Complaints Policy**

Directors noted the update to the recently approved policy.

RESOLVED: APPROVED

Signed:…*Jade Renville*………………………………………….. Date:…24/02/2025…………………………

RHT 24/84 **6.6 Health & Safety monitoring report**
Directors noted the most recent H&S monitoring report, as reviewed by the F&GP Committee at their last meeting in October.

RHT 24/85 **6.7 People Strategy Update**
Directors noted and discussed the update.

RHT 24/86 **6.8 Committee Reports for 2023/2024**
Directors received the annual reports from each committee.

RHT 24/87 **6.9 Apprenticeship audit report**
Directors noted the apprenticeship audit report, as previously reviewed by the Audit & Risk Committee at their recent meeting of 28th November.

RHT 24/88 **6.10 Gender Pay Gap Report**
Directors noted the report as reviewed recently by the Governance & People (G&P) Committee at their recent meeting of 13th November.

RHT 24/89 **6.11 Board Self-Evaluation 2023/24**
Directors noted the findings and recommendations from their recent self-evaluation as reviewed by the G&P Committee on 2nd October.

Catherine Christie left the meeting.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS
7.1 Any other business

RHT 24/90 **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.

RHT 24/91 **7.3 Agenda for next meeting**
Directors noted the agenda.

RHT 24/92 **7.4 Next meeting dates**
Directors noted the next meeting dates.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 7.20pm

Signed:…*Jade Renville*………………………………………….. Date:…24/02/2025…………………………