

**THINKING SCHOOLS ACADEMY TRUST**  
**COMPANY NUMBER: 7359755**

Subject	<b>Meeting of the Board of Directors</b>	Date	2 <sup>nd</sup> February 2022
Room	Via Teams Call	Time	5.00pm
Present	Stuart Gardner (SG), David Lycett (DL), Derek Morrison (DM), Gerard Newman (GN), Michael Bailey (MB), Ian Mason (IM), Linda Randall (LR), Vickey Ferguson (VF), Peter Martin (PM)	Clerk	Jennifer Coates
Apologies accepted	Steven Geary (SGE), Julie Spurgeon (JS)	In attendance	Kelly Denton (KD), Lee Miller (LM), Kaye Bettey (KB), Natalie Sheppard (NS)
Non-attendees			

<b>Key Points Discussed and Action Items</b>				
<b>No.</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Action/Discussion</b>	<b>By whom</b>	<b>When</b>
1.	<b>Declaration of business interests</b>	There were no declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda.		
2.	<b>Welcome and apologies for absence</b>	PM welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from Steven Geary and Julie Spurgeon		
3.	<b>Minutes and matters arising</b>	Minutes and matters arising were reviewed from the meeting of 15 <sup>th</sup> December 2021 and agreed by all.		
4.	<b>CEO Verbal Update</b>	NS provided strategic feedback on 1-1 device strategy at TPA. This included the following key information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 80% take up from students at TPA.</li> <li>- Income so far ██████████ 98% success rate with direct debit service.</li> </ul>		

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students positive and digital skills are building well. Devices are accelerating learning.</li> <li>- TES published an article about the scheme and Microsoft has asked us to present on it at BET.</li> <li>- In school savings being made on copier/printing costs.</li> <li>- Recorded impact on student learning, student literacy, reading ability and their ability to organise their resources.</li> <li>- Assisted in securing knowledge in Science.</li> <li>- Positive impact on teacher’s workload and can now mark a whole class in 30 minutes.</li> </ul> <p><b>Director Q – On a recent visit Year 7 raised that they felt they were wasting time in lessons where a lot of technical things do not work. What has been built in around teaching and learning and upskilling teachers to support with this?</b></p> <p><b>NS A – Classroom monitoring software is not yet in place yet. Nick has identified we can switch on additional filtering which is happening tomorrow. Some students do not have the digital skills for their laptop or are going off task. There has been a ‘hump’ for teachers adapting to the changes but they are past that now. With teacher effectiveness and training, after a small amount of initial resistance, we have many key middle leaders on board. Investment in digital learning ambassadors and professional development strategy led by Kev has been positive.</b></p> <p><b>Director Q – What access do disadvantaged students have at home?</b></p> <p><b>NS A – We have deployed DFE devices to make sure every pupil has a device at home but this is not a long-term solution. We will keep going out to offer devices again at a lower cost.</b></p> <p><b>Director Q –How do you measure that learning is being accelerated through the use of this scheme?</b></p> <p><b>NS A – Digital skill development has been built into students reports so teachers’ feedback on how their skills are growing. English, Maths and Science are using power BI as a new way of tracking pupil progress. On this tracking system it shows Students that have come from TSAT schools are making better progress to target than non TSAT schools. At this stage we cannot say with certainty this is because of the devices.</b></p>		
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		<p><b>Director Q – What is our strategy for content delivery and making sure we understand how that fits in with the curriculum and what it is we are disseminating through the devices?</b></p> <p><b>NS A – Middle Leaders did a lot of work to adapt curriculums to include teaching with technology. Devices are being used as a substitution for texts and papers as a method of delivery. We are now exploring how it can enhance learning through the different tools that we have got.</b></p> <p><b>Director Q – Is that on a school by school basis or is it a strategy across the trust?</b></p> <p><b>NS A – Maritime is going 1-1 device straight away from the start. We will be looking at how we share digital resources with Maritime teachers. As an exec we are looking at aligning school curriculums where we have shared exam schemes or curriculum resources.</b></p> <p><b>Director Q – In terms of the further roll out across the trust, are we encountering any supply issues?</b></p> <p><b>NS A – No issues reported from supply chain.</b></p> <p>SG delivered his verbal CEO report with contributions from LM. This included the following key information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>Trust expansion</u> - [REDACTED]</li> <li>- <u>School leadership changes</u> – New Head to be appointed at TPA for September. R Grey will be supporting NS in Director role. Appointing a Head of School for Maritime. [REDACTED]. All Faiths new Head of School which will be an external appointment. Offered Kirsty to be Headteacher 1 over Strood primaries – building JM capacity in Strood.</li> <li>- <u>Finances</u> - Support staff pay structure review out to staff for consultation which has landed well. Awaiting results. Fuel cost rises will impact us will be approx.</li> </ul>	SG	30/03
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		<p>Gas is on a fixed tariff until September/October next year when will likely see a similar increase. We have flagged concerns with DFE.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>Maritime Academy</u> - Judicial review complete. Children will have access to provision they need on the temporary site. JM has done a remarkable job in planning and avoiding congestion with other schools and as a result Maritime will have a different school week to others in the trust. We have received 286 applications, 96 of those TSAT schools. We expect to be full. JM is now going into a 3-week recruitment phase which has received significant interest including current TSAT employees. SG commended JM and Central team for their work.</li> </ul> <p><b>Director Q –Will the transport time impact time of school day and how was the parent consultation on the temporary building at Stoke?</b></p> <p><b>SG A – Yes, they will have a longer school day Monday – Thursday and a shorter day on Friday to allow for transport to work. JM has put together a really good curriculum plan e.g. extra-curricular slot on the Friday.</b></p> <p><b>LM A - In terms of parental consultation on temporary site no real concerns – common theme was wanting to understand transport arrangements. These will be confirmed in the next 4 weeks.</b></p> <p><b>Director Q – What sort of impact will there be on schools within the trust if people leave them to join Maritime?</b></p> <p><b>SG A – JM is going to share the list of those staff that have expressed an interest with their current Headteachers. Maritime will be our most vulnerable school needing some of our best staff which Headteachers will appreciate. The key is to make those appointments as early as possible to backfill position.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>Sports hall at RGS</u>. The hall should have been up and running but remains quite a way off from completion. The handover for Art &amp; DT building has happened which is a good resource. The updated handover is scheduled for 16<sup>th</sup> May but this is tenuous. The grant funding deadline has been extended to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. Contingency plans are in place for where to host the summer examinations.</li> </ul> <p><b>Director Q – Are we getting into a vicious circle with the delays and the extra costs the contractor is making that they are disincentivised to finish the project?</b></p>		
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**LM A -** [REDACTED]

**We are meeting with them regularly and for them the positive is that it is government funded project and the report we write at the end will sway future government contracts.**

**Director Q - Do we have any indications that the contractors are in any financial trouble?**

**LM A - We have not seen their latest accounts but we regularly ask the question. One of their key sub-contractors went into liquidation which has caused much of the but a new contractor has been secured. There are staff are on site and we are seeing deliveries so activity has not stopped but we are not seeing level of activity of a company who is motivated to get this completed at pace.**

**Director Q - RGS Headteacher has expressed she is concerned about examinations. Does she have funding for invigilators, storage for E block...**

**LM A - We will assign any associated costs to the project and we are submitting financial penalties to the contractor. We are working with Headteacher to make sure she has the support needed.**

**Director Q - We have a signed contract with Logan's; are they now in breach of contract?**

**LM A -** [REDACTED]

**Director Q - Have we considered starting with a new contractor?**

**LM A -** [REDACTED]

		<p><b>Director Q – Are you talking about contingency plans just for summer exams or for all exams?</b></p> <p><b>LM A – RGS have delivered on mock exams using internal resources – the focus of the contingency plan is the examinations during May/June period.</b></p> <p><b>Director Q – Are the contingency plans in line with the latest TAG guidance about where the exams are supposed to be held.</b></p> <p><b>LM A – The contingency plan we put in place will meet regulations for public examinations.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>Strategic plan 22/23– Context</u> - The significant amount of work such as new schools joining the trust has put a strain on trust wide leadership.</li> <li>- <u>Strategic plan 22/23 – Proposal</u> to add a 6<sup>th</sup> pillar for exceptional central services. Be your best self. Launching delivering total education. Developing use of single central network sharing curriculums and providing support to staff. Relaunching Thinking Horizons. Stage 2 of embedding Personalised CPD mapping. Trialling new MIS system at Maritime (Bromcom), if successful rolled out over a period of years to the hubs. SG commended Dan for his work on this. Securing the onboarding process for new schools. Continue Recognition and launch new internal recognition programme. We are One, MAT meets for staff to be timetabled. This is the initial draft phase. <i>Board members to let Peter or Gerard if there is anything else they want included in these discussions know to feedback to SG/LM.</i></li> </ul>		30/03
5.	<b>Significant change to TPA</b>	<p>LM delivered proposal regarding the significant change request at TPA. This included the following key information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This is stage 2 following the work we completed with Penhale’s special provision.</li> <li>- Proposed to have an Alternative Provision at TPA which will offer 32 places for Year 5 – Year 11. This will involve reconditioning the Maths block.</li> <li>- This is a significant change to funding agreement but there is no impact to TPA admission numbers.</li> <li>- LA are funding the works to make the changes. We will then enter into a commission agreement to offer 32 places.</li> </ul>	All Directors	

		<i>PM initiated a vote on the decision to agree the significant change to TPA. There was a unanimous agreement from all Trustees.</i>		
6.	<b>Admission Arrangements</b>	<p>LM presented report on the 4 schools who entered consultation processes for their admissions arrangements. Other schools who did not make significant changes submitted their updated policies for board approval. The report included the following key information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gordons are reducing their PAN 60. This means they aligned to infant school PAN. Supported by LA and the Trust.</li> </ul> <p><b>Director Q –Any redundancies as a result of this?</b></p> <p><b>LM A – I cannot guarantee anything but we would always try to redeploy staff where possible. We know we will be full at 60.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Plympton Academy’s admissions policy to remain the same. PAN is at 210.</li> <li>- Penhale Infant school are reducing their PAN to 60. Previously it was 90 but they never secured that level of pupil numbers. First choices are currently at 58. Further opportunity to look at development of nursery area and an enhanced early year. Supported by LA and Trust.</li> <li>- Victory Academy reducing PAN to 210 due to the site. Previously 240. Supported by LA and Trust.</li> </ul> <p><i>PM initiated a vote on the decision to approve all changes to admission policies submitted to the Board. There was a unanimous agreement from all Trustees.</i></p>		
7.	<b>Governance and Development Plan Update</b>	<p>KD presented an update to the board which included the following key information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The board strategy on diversity. Updated timeframes so it falls in line with the Trust diversity roll out.</li> <li>- Jon Cavill session next week on what a MAT inspection looks like and how we can prepare.</li> <li>- Skills audit will be circulated shortly.</li> <li>- Matt Goodwin has been working on communication with parents and pupils and will provide an update at the next meeting.</li> </ul> <p>KD presented a proposal for approval by the board to authorise a change in the Governance structure at MIS and MJS, which would then be consulted on with the relevant AABs &amp;</p>		

		<p>RGB. This included the following key information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The proposal is to merge the schools to have one AAB.</li> <li>- S Paine will now be HT over both schools. It makes sense that they have one AAB to look over 2 schools.</li> <li>- Proposal at this stage is for board to authorise progression conversations with AAB and RGB.</li> </ul> <p><i>PM initiated vote of decision to approve the merging of AAB. Unanimous agreement from all Directors.</i></p>		
8.	<b>Communication from the Board to the Trust Community</b>	<p>KD summarised communications from this meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Thank you to JM for work with Maritime.</li> <li>- Kent RGB – updates for RGS summer examinations.</li> </ul>		
9.	<b>AOB &amp; Correspondence to the Chair</b>	<p><i>PM/KD noted that there was a remote decision of Sue Dann being South West RGB Chair.</i></p> <p><b>Director Q –Is there any update for the Board on land sale at Goodwin?</b></p> <p><b>LM A –Feedback from the DFE was they wanted to seek advice from other colleagues. Asked for us to submit a formal request for write off of the loan. LM has a strategy in place on next steps.</b></p> <p><b>Director Q – What is the timeline on this?</b></p> <p><b>LM A – Next couple of weeks. Business case with finance at the moment and will then be submitted. Copy of business case and response will be sent to Finance Committee.</b></p> <p>LM presented the updates to the Trust Exclusion Policy. This included the following key information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Annual review rather than bi-annual.</li> <li>- Removing the decision to exclude with ‘immediate notification’ to ‘notification without delay’.</li> </ul> <p><b>Director Q – There is a statement that members of the panel should have no personal or school interest in its resolve; does that limit AAB members being on the panel?</b></p> <p><b>KD/LM A – AAB members can be on the panel but if they only sit on the AAB and not the RGB they cannot Chair the meeting and there should only be one AAB member on</b></p>		



		<p><b>the panel.</b></p> <p><i>PM initiated vote of decision to approve the Exclusion Policy. Unanimous agreement from all Directors.</i></p>		
	<b>Items for next agenda</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- RGS building works and update and impact on exams and Financial case to ESFA which will come through from committee update.</li> <li>- SG proposed to a one item agenda that is focussed around strategic plan for next year so the Board have a chance to have an input into that plan. <i>KD/PM will plan the agenda. Possibly the strategic catch up may be a separate ad-hoc meeting.</i></li> <li>- LM asked for the review of due diligence for [REDACTED] so we can meet 1<sup>st</sup> September transfer deadline to be included on next agenda.</li> </ul>	<i>KD/P M</i>	<i>16/02</i>
	<b>Date of next meeting</b>	<p>30<sup>th</sup> March 2022 at 5pm. Confirmation on location will be sent out shortly.</p> <p>Meeting closed at 6.33pm</p>		