



An Daras Trust
Igniting Curiosity Growing Capabilities

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09/07/2024

Minutes
Full Board of Directors Summer Meeting
Tuesday 9th July 2024 at 9.30am at ADMAT Central Office

1. **Welcome and Apologies/Trust Identity Slides**
Present: Steve Tavener, Graeme Barriball, Margaret Savage, Gill Shippides, Claire Paul, Jon Sharpe, Will Hermon
Apologies: Peter Hague (away), Ian Wilkinson (away)
Apologies: Jo Callow (Ex-Officio) (CEO Course)
In Attendance: Emma Gilbert (CFO), Toni Martin (Governance Officer)
2. **Declarations of Interest/Pecuniary Interests relevant to this Agenda**
Annual declarations were submitted at this meeting, TM will obtain IW's and PH's interests before the end of term.
3. **Confirm Minutes of previous full Board meeting (20th March 2024) and matters arising**
 - It was noted that although there are peaks and troughs, the financial viability of pre-schools over time is sustainable. **A spring and summer review of pre-school figures for comparison.** *WH updated the Board, we are in a better position than we were in this last time year and if we take all the pre-schools as a whole, the picture is feasible.*
 - **Propose a feasibility study for moving the pre-school; an evaluation on Launceston Pre-School and in-depth survey of potential building work at WHA.** *The property manager has completed an initial survey at the WHA site and will complete a more detailed survey in the Autumn term. It will be a long-term project given due to the need to sell the current property with ESFA permission, planning permission and so on.*
 - **Review attendance policy with regard to new statutory guidance in Autumn term.** *Already on the LSS agenda for summer term. Reviewed and approved on 8th May 24.*
 - **Review and amend Governance Support Document.** *Complete, see amended version in SP folder for approval. It was agreed that preparation is required for the external governance review in the Autumn term.*
 - **Approve Written Financial Scheme of Delegation following the transfer completion.** *Discussed at audit committee, no changes required following transfer, so approval at last full Board still stands.*

No confidential minutes. Board agreed the minutes and the Chair signed a copy.

4. **Confidential Matters**
The Board discussed a matter raised at a previous committee meeting under confidential matters. The finance team has investigated the matter and it seems clearer where the £200K+ deficit lays and this was discussed in detail by the Board. **It was agreed that an external audit of the previous Duchy**

accounts is important to ensure there is an independent view of what has happened with their finances prior to transferring into An Daras. This is to be arranged by WH/EG.

5. **Final Transfer Matters**

None. All matters dealt with or in hand. WH updated on some staffing matters. The Board thanked WH and the team for all the hard work bringing Duchy schools into An Daras Trust.

6. **CEO Report to Board**

WH explained the background to the Trust Identity slides and why it is important that everyone in the trust understands what we are about. The Board agreed that this is important.

WH updated on the recent SSCA Ofsted inspection where they achieved a strong good with many outstanding features. The inspection process was discussed and it was noted that (1) the inspector very much had welfare in mind and (2) there seems to be an interest in looking at data again which is noted going forward. Governance was good but the monitoring needs to have more rigour and evidenced as such to be outstanding.

WH updated on KS2 SATs results which are positive. **What are we doing right?** Rigour, standards and consistency is very important and we are now good at ensuring this. End of KS1 very reasonable and no real identified weakness. End of year 6 writing in 2024 is ok across Trust less Werrington which needs further consideration. It was specifically noted that (1) LT data was looking weak previously, lots of extra interventions and they now have a really good set of results, and some of the best seen in 5 years at the school, including 40% at GDS; (2) SC were very good results including 87% at reading with 30% GDS and (3) Other trust schools with positive results and good levels at GDS. The one concern is Wer KS2 and looking at what we can do there to strengthen KS2 outcomes. **It should be noted though that the KS2 results aren't too bad, staff have changed and these results are still an offshoot of Covid so it should be better going forward; so while it deserves some attention, it is not a huge concern.** This was discussed.

External school improvement review was very good and a strong positive report was received; very flexible and effective approach, and excellent culture within the trust. This will now positively inform any future discussions at the RDD's office with regard to this trust and potential growth.

WH updated on new schools. Boyton is looking more positive and is making good progress towards a successful Ofsted. Lewannick needs some more support going forward. Callington will be fine for the time being so the focus can be on the 2 smaller schools for now. WH noted that the Head at CG is retiring and another staff member is leaving. The succession plan for staff and school leadership is currently being looked at, probably from within the trust with some restructuring.

Attendance figures are positive and absence figures are not too low. It was noted a lot of work has gone in to achieving good attendance, and it was noted at the recent SSCA Ofsted.

WH noted the likely areas for the trust improvement plan. It was recommended from the external improvement review that we put together a "small school strategy" to showcase how we manage the success at the small schools. Staffing expenditure needs to be looked at as the new ESFA guidelines are lower than previously and this is not considered feasible. Likely focus for next year's improvement plan could be:

- Maintain important focus on rights Respecting Schools strategy
- Review and reorganise existing school class structures in preparation for the following year due to falling rolls
- Embed teaching and learning improvements completed at Boyton and Lewannick including IT development

- Ensure smooth leadership succession or transition across all schools – maintain focus on CG
- Continue with next stage of Thinking Matters CPD programme for all schools including former Duchy schools
- Extend Trust Peer to Peer Collaborative Learning Programme with TEAM Academy Trust
- Implement Trust strategy on improving learning behaviours across all Trust schools
- Rationalisation plan for SENDCo staffing across the Trust
- Ensure new SI Officer roles (English and Curriculum) deliver impact on T+L quality
- Embed changes to the federated LGB and new school hub model
- Implement next phase of sustainability and net zero plan in line with trust charter developed in 23/24.
- Plan for 65% staffing target against income from September 25
- Develop an Trust Small-School Strategy

What is happening with the federated LGBs? WH updated that SSCA and Lewannick LGBs will federate, Boyton will go in with NP&W, and Callington & Coads Green will federate. It is noted that the Chair at SC is leaving with no replacement, and it makes sense to also federate the 2 church schools so they fall in line with the rest of the trust. It will also help with governor numbers and a lot of the aspects of school life are similar given they are both church schools. There was much discussion on this subject. It was decided that SC and LT should federate along with the others, and it will be discussed with both governing boards to explain that this doesn't mean double the work load as a lot of the things are similar and things will be prioritised. It has worked for a number of years at NP&W so there is no reason why it shouldn't work across the trust. TM will meet with the LT LGB Chair to discuss.

7. **Risks & Improvement**

Improvement plan update is still being worked on and a full review can be done in Autumn term. Identified by the Audit committee the main areas for upgrading the risk factors for next year; pupil numbers, increasing staffing costs and further financial pressures. Smaller risks can be removed. Risk register will be available for autumn term. Noting the improvement plan is already on the agenda for autumn term, **add risk register to autumn term agenda (TM/WH)**

8. **Latest Monthly Management Accounts/Current Budget**

EG noted the April management accounts are complete and May is in hand. **It is noted that going forward the deficit has reduced the reserves to around £170K which is much lower than it should be.** EG noted that some elements will balance out and at year end it will improve. WH noted that this is a national picture, not specific to our trust, and falling roll numbers is not helping. **This needs to be monitored carefully as if the reserves continue to be too low, the trust may no longer be a going concern.** This was discussed in detail and the need to combine classes, reduce TA hours, look at staffing and so on. EG noted that from a benchmarking perspective, the Duchy schools are too high on teaching and support staff.

WH noted come contracts:

Grounds maintenance contract – same cost as last year with current contractor. **Approved.**

Wolfestans legal contract – also used by Duchy schools, so this has been combined. **Approved.**

Phone systems contract – explained by WH. **Approved.**

EG updated the Board on PSF and Imp, and the way forward regarding an accounting system and reporting system that will save money in future.

9. **Approve Balanced Budget**

New revised budgets do balance but there are some decisions required. No schools have got the same levels of staffing as last year due to falling roll numbers. Callington class numbers are too low

so restructuring is required. Tweaks have been made to SC and changes are required at SSCA. **Are the low numbers in Duchy schools recent or have been an ongoing issue?** Gradually been a problem over time, but the staffing levels have and continue to be too high currently. **Is the budget truly balanced or is it based on a load of assumptions that may or may not come to fruition?** It is balanced but not all staff are yet aware of the requirements. The Heads are aware of the requirements. In terms of central staff, decisions and actions are required to streamline this but HR processes need to be followed. The budget for Callington and others has only been balanced by reducing the central contribution. Therefore, there is an urgent need to both reduce the overall budgets for the schools and reduce the Central budget as discussed to ensure the balanced budget is maintained. This will involve some difficult decisions.

It was confirmed that if the list of assumptions are followed, the budget should remain balanced. However, any future decisions by the government are not yet known. **Action: Review list of assumptions against the budget in the Autumn term (FRS)**

Budget Approved.

10. Agree 3-year Budget Forecast Return

Approved and will be submitted to ESFA by 30 July.

11. Pre-School Review

Covered in item 3.

12. Annual Governance Statement

This was discussed and agreed. The Chair will review prior to completion of the audit. Confirmation statement will be complete at Companies House by 8 Aug.

13. Internal Audit

Discuss by exception any outstanding internal audit findings; initial report received by Directors. Further work underway and this can be reviewed next term.

Recommendation from Audit committee is to use Griffin again for a 3rd year and the **Board approved the appointment of Griffin as Internal Auditor in 2025.**

14. Recommend Appointment of External Auditor to Members

The Board discussed this in detail and considered other options but strongly recommend that Francis Clerk is used again for the 5th time in 2025, with a view to sourcing potential other providers for 2026. This is partly to ensure that there is consistency with incorporating the new schools into the trust. It was also agreed that there are slim pickings when it comes to other external auditors.

Recommendation to the Members is to appoint Francis Clerk as external auditor in 2026.

15. Review Trust Documents

a. **Scheme of Delegation** – no changes except removing some old references. Note with the forthcoming governance review, it is important for directors to refresh their knowledge of this document. **This will need to be reviewed and amended in the Autumn term given the federation of governing boards (WH/TM)**

b. **Decision Planner** – no changes.

c. **Cyclical Plan** – some minor amendments. **Need to review and possibly amend in Autumn term given federation of governing boards and priorities (TM)**

Approved.

16. Safeguarding

Safer recruitment training has been completed by MS. Minor changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) received by the Board. It is likely that there will be some more major changes to KCSiE in 2025. The Local Authority changes were also noted. Any progress of the appointment of deputy safeguarding officer? CP briefed that this is in hand but that she is not planning to leave in the near future.

17. Actions from Committees

Actions for full Board:

- LSS – None.
- FRS – None. Two committees this term which has been useful to tackle the budget and it was agreed that this will continue in future summer terms.
- Audit – None.
- LGBs – None.

18. Complaints and Compliments

No complaints. Compliment of external review of School Improvement Feedback noted. Also noted that the SSCA Ofsted feedback was very positive about trust support.

19. Governance Code of Conduct Policy

Changes/additions noted. Policy approved.

20. Director/Member Visit to New Schools

It was agreed that Directors will visit all 3 new schools in September. TM will circulate a date and book a mini bus and liaise with Heads.

21. AOB

Did the playground at SC get sorted or are there still issues with it? WH updated, including the lack of communication from the contractor.

22. Date of next meeting

Date of next meeting is Weds 11th Dec 2024 in the central office.

The meeting closed at 11.45

TJH Martin
Governance Officer

Distribution List:

W. Hermon – CEO Director S. Tavener – Director (Chair) G. Barriball – Director P. Hague – Director C. Paul – Director J. Sharpe – Director (Vice)	I. Wilkinson – Director G. Shippides – Foundation Director M. Savage – Director E. Gilbert – CFO J. Callow – Ex Officio Observer
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