



An Daras Trust
Igniting Curiosity Growing Capabilities

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CEO: W. T. Hermon

12/07/2023

Minutes
Full Board of Directors Spring Meeting
Wednesday 12th July 2023 at 9.30am at ADMAT Central Office

1. Welcome and Apologies

Welcome: Steve Tavener (Chair), Pete Hague, Jon Sharpe, Ian Wilkinson, Margaret Savage, Gill Shippies, Claire Paul, Will Hermon

Apologies: Trudy Rudge (work), Graeme Barriball (Holiday abroad)

In Attendance: Emma Gilbert (CFO), Jo Callow (Ex-Officio), Toni Martin (Governance Officer)

2. Declarations of Interest/Pecuniary Interests relevant to this Agenda

None declared relevant to this agenda. Annual declarations were submitted by all Directors less TR and GB who will submit electronically.

3. Confirm Minutes of previous full Board meeting (22nd March 2023) and matters arising

- Approve amended Reserves policy with ringfence funds for critical incident risk. *Approved.*
- Approve Financial Scheme of Delegation as recommended by the FRS. *Approved.*

No actions from the confidential minutes.

Confirm Minutes of previous Extra-Ordinary Meeting (29th March 2023) and matters arising

Short meeting to approve catering contract, no matters arising.

Board agreed the minutes and the Chair signed a copy of each.

4. Confidential Matters

Trust expansion matters were discussed and recorded at confidential minutes.

5. CEO Report to Board

The CEO's report was provided to the Board prior to the meeting. WH issued the Directors with the latest KS1 & 2 data which was received on 11th July. He briefed the Board on a summary of each school, key points noted:

SC

- KS1 EYFS good, Y1 phonics is strong, Y2 RWM good, a little work required on disadvantaged attainment.
- KS2 benchmarks well against national average.
- Due inspection, no real concerns but work will be done on disadvantaged/FSM.

PT

- Generally 'green' across the board and since they first joined the trust, the attainment and progress has improved dramatically.
- Due inspection, no concerns.

WHA

- KS1 needs a little work around writing and boys maths but generally good.
- It was noted that the KS2 combined is low but the reason for this is known and tutoring is in place.
- Overall, generally good with some areas of excellence, and some small areas for improvement.
- Inspection complete – graded Good.

Coads Green

- Small cohort, some mobility, combined scores and some inconsistencies need to be addressed.
- Inspection complete – graded Good.

North Petherwin

- Some figures a little lower than it would have been due to mobility, EAL and EHCP.
- Inspection complete – graded Good.

Werrington

- Inclusive school with mobility, reasonable set of data, boys at Yr 2 need extra provision.
- Inspection complete – graded Good.

LT

- KS2 data was expected to be better, boys EGPS is low, reading good but overall consistency of data is a little patchy.
- Inspection complete – graded Good.

SSCA

- Complicated data as it includes the ARB.
- Considering high levels of educational need and disadvantaged children, the data is reasonable.
- On the whole the KS2 data benchmarks well against national.
- Due inspection. Previously outstanding; unlikely to keep this grade but should be securely good.

National KS2 figures were noted. It was noted that this data is only attainment as progress will not be available until October. **Why does a FSM child necessarily need more provision?** It was noted that there may be able children who are in receipt of FSM but evidence shows this cohort needs more provision.

WH noted that some Annual Service Level Agreement Contracts are due for renewal:

- Legal and HR Services with Wolfestans – within CEO's delegation and Board content to remain with Wolfestans for 23-24.
- Health and Safety Advice and Guidance – the trust has no one qualified to do this internally. Previously it was a 3 year contract. Cornwall County Council provided a quote; this includes access to online risk assessments, duty H&S officer, accident reporting system and H&S audits. It is difficult to compare contracts for best value because a private company cannot provide a like for like service with the systems we need to use. Cornwall Council provide a good service and the quote is not much higher than it was 3 years ago. **The board agreed to accept this 3 year H&S contract.**

- Property Surveyor Services is currently Ray Clarke Services. For 23-24, he has quoted at same price as last year – it includes fire risk assessments (saving of around £3.5K) and asbestos compliance (at around £350 per site). **The Board agreed to renew this contract.**

WH noted that some premises issues are bubbling away. SC playground needs re-tarmacing but it is outside consideration for a CIF bid. Work on flats above the Launceston preschool still needs consideration but the Board agreed this should be put on hold until the pre-school review is done. SSCA pre-school needs improvement work on the roof at around £6-7K but it is only a short term fix, and this can be done over the summer. **Is there a plan to submit any CIF bids?** Previous unsuccessful bid for Wer roof will be re-submitted. There aren't any other larger issues presently but smaller issues that we will not be able to bid for. **The Boards decision was to fund the SSCA pre-school work over the summer, SC playground next school year and put the pre-school flats on hold for now.**

Numbers on roll is looking more positive and we seem to be picking up children from other schools. Attendance has been a little lower than it should have been but over the year there has been improvement, and it is in line with national average. Absence was discussed by the board.

Chair thanked WH for the detailed report.

6. Risks & Improvement

WH noted the latest version of the risk register and reviewed improvement plan which has made good progress. He also briefly noted the likely possible priorities for next year:

- Curriculum (develop metacognition).
- Behaviour policy and reinforcing expectations, attitude to learning and learning behaviour.
- UNICEF Rights Respecting Children (WH noted that SSCA has earned the Gold award and WHA has earned the Silver award to date).
- Sustainability.
- Vulnerable groups (SEND, EAL, disadvantaged).
- Further extend school improvement offer in line with the trust quality descriptions.
- Financial management and budget fidelity.
- Possible expansion.

There was a 3rd party SEND review done about 18 months ago – what progress have we made here? Overall, Ofsted's view of SEND has been positive and there has been some specific work done, with further specific work planned for the future. **Can we dig out the report and make sure that we have addressed everything?** Yes this will be done and reported back to the next meeting.

Action: Update on 3rd party SEND review outcomes to next full Board (WH)

7. Latest Monthly Management Accounts/Current Budget

April complete and provided to the Directors. May reports are due out soon. EG noted the budget is currently in deficit but this was projected due to covid recovery and expenditure on education to ensure good Ofsted outcomes. There has also been unexpected expenditure on unfunded staff pay increases. It was noted that the deficit cannot continue to happen but the board agreed that this deficit is known about and educationally we have a strong performance, and costs have gone up everywhere. Hopefully next year pupil funding increases will help keep things on track. There is still the question of pay rises and hopefully any pay rises in future will be funded.

8. Approve Balanced Budget

Budgets have been formulated and balanced but are tight. There is a 3% staff increase unfunded included but have not put in any additional pay increase. So if additional funding is received it will be additional income not currently included in the budget.

The Board approved the budget for the next financial year.

9. Agree 3-year Budget Forecast Return

Provided to the Board and approved. This will be submitted to the ESFA by 30 July.

10. Pre-School Project

WH noted that pre-schools on the whole are struggling to be financially viable and many are closing both nationally and locally. We are not exempt from needing to make our pre-schools more financially viable under the current funding model. The aim would be to look at An Daras provision to ensure it is financially viable while perhaps providing an enhanced service (longer hours etc). This could be done in a number of ways and JC will review and look at options.

Action: Report progress of pre-school project to next full Board (JC)

11. Annual Governance Statement

The Board discussed items for the next annual governance statement. The Chair noted that we need to celebrate the successes that we have had this year. The report will be drafted and run past the Chair and another Director for checking, before being submitted with the annual accounts next term.

12. Internal Audit

The internal audit report was made available to the Board; it was positively received and the in-depth look at the payroll system has been useful. This was discussed in detail at the Audit committee. **The Board agreed that the service provided by this auditor is an improvement and that Griffin should be used again for the next academic year.**

13. Recommend Appointment of External Auditor to Members

No further updates on last year's observations from the external audit; all actions complete. The committee discussed the external auditor for 2024. It is considered that Francis Clark work well with the trust and it would be useful to keep the same auditor if the trust expansion goes ahead. If Francis Clark are used in 2024, it will be the 4th year they have been appointed and this falls within the acceptable window of 3-6 years. There are also limited options for external auditors and many of them now only do virtual audits which is not considered beneficial to our ways of working.

The Board made a recommendation to the Members to appoint Francis Clark for the 2024 external audit.

14. GAG Pooling

If we consider 3 types of GAG pooling – either take all the money centrally and dish out as required, or give all the money to the schools but this is not considered suitable as money can be saved by doing some things centrally. Or there is an in between version where schools get some money and some is centrally controlled. This hybrid version of gag pooling is what we currently do allowing a central pot that can be drawn on by schools. After much consideration, it is recommended that we maintain the hybrid system as it works well but it was agreed that it does need to be formalised. A policy on how the money is controlled, how it is bid for and allocated needs to be published so that it is more transparent to the schools. Perhaps this could be include in the current finance policy.

Action: Draft a Hybrid GAG pooling policy (or section to include in the finance policy) (EG)

15. Trust Quality Descriptions

Released by the DfE in April 2023; to exist and expand as a trust, these trust quality descriptions need to be met. Reporting across the trust and school improvements has already been adjusted to fall in line with these descriptions.

16. Review Trust Governance Documents

a. Scheme of Delegation

Approved with no amendments. Further review considered if expansion occurs.

b. Decision Planner

Approved with no amendments. Further review considered if expansion occurs.

c. Cyclical Plan (CP)

A few minor amendments to the LGB agenda items. It is noted that the S157 timings and action plans don't always match the CP. It was decided to put safeguarding on each full agenda to allow any safeguarding items to be discussed by exception.

17. S157

All Cornish schools have submitted their safeguarding audits (S157) by 30 June and the Devon schools are not due to be submitted until December. Action plans will be notified in autumn term. It was noted that safeguarding has been reported positively during Ofsted inspections. KCSiE will be out in September and there are not expected to be many amendments.

18. Actions from Committees

- LSS – None.
- FRS – Agree scope of pre-school review project – see item 10. Reserves Policy – see item 3.
- Audit – Critical incident risk funding £30K on Reserves Policy – see item 3. Financial Scheme of Delegation – see item 3.
- LGBs – None.
- Governance Support – update from MS/GS. Ongoing support of the Chair of SSCA LGB with MS to upskill the chair to look at school improvement. Met twice face to face, one telephone call and attended 2 LGB meetings. A final meeting later today to round off the year. It has gone well. The 2nd meeting there was much more time allocated to school improvement and the discussion around it. There was a pre meeting between Chair and HT with an agreement on which parts of the school improvement would be focussed on. Hopefully this will continue. It is assessed that at the second meeting, the HT felt pressure from MS being there. Going forward need to think about this, although TM noted that MS' presence is help the Chair and not to hold the HT to account. They need to work some more on challenging and probing questions.

19. Complaints and Compliments

No complaints and various compliments from Ofsted and parents.

20. AOB

TM will organise some more Director visits in the Autumn term. No other business.

21. Date of next meeting

Dates of all committee meetings and full Board meeting are as follows:

Learning, Standards & Safeguarding [LSS]	Weds 27 th Sep at 9:30am at Central Office
Finance, Resources & Staffing [FRS]	Weds 11 th Oct at 9:30am at Central Office
Audit [Au]	Wed 6 th Dec at 9:30am at Central Office (includes External Audit)

Extra-Ordinary Full Board	Likely to be in September – date TBC
Full Board	Mon 13 th Dec at 9.30am at Central Office

The meeting closed at 12 noon.

TJH Martin
Governance Officer

Distribution List:

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