

Southfields Multi-Academy Trust Board Meeting
Via Google Meet
Wednesday 15th July 2020

Attendees: Susan Hayday, George Dryja, Sian Tyler, Liz Barclay, Alexis Martinowsky, Sarah Taylor, Jacqueline Valin, Wanda Golinska, Deborah Rix
Apologies: Andrew Gardner, John Moore

Item	Discussion	Action
1. Welcome, Quorum & Apologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Susan Hayday (SH) welcomed all to the meeting. • Apologies received from Andrew and John Moore. SH said there were various questions which had been sent to her which she will raise during the meeting. 	
2. Declarations of Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None declared. 	
3. Previous Minutes (Papers 1 & 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All agreed these were a true record. 	
4. Matters arising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	
5. Chair's Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing to report. 	
6. Chief Executive's Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SH referred to the amount of detail in the reports, so invited Jackie Valin (JV) to give a brief summary and take questions. • Referring to her report, JV said the biggest issue has been Covid and, related to this, the safeguarding of children who have not been in school, as well as the mental health of staff and students. • There has been a great deal of constantly changing guidance from the DfE. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Latest (limited) guidance says students will return to school in September which is proving challenging to plan for. • Since the last meeting, nursing at Linden Lodge remains an issue. Very little progress since March meeting. JV has written complaint to CEO and Chair of CCG. Crisis situation from September. • Re Strategic Plan – nothing to report due to Covid but in normal circumstances these have been on track. • KPIs - both schools have undertaken a mammoth six week task, SA led by Tracy Gray. • Finances – Steve has produced accounts. Considerable expenditure on PPE in both schools, decision on whether this will be funded is awaited. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual curriculum running in both schools – great deal of work from staff involved in getting this going from a negative starting point. • Risks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ofsted spot check possible in autumn. Inspectors won't be allowed on site unless they provide proof of a negative Covid test. - Health – maintenance of the Therapy contract and now nursing is an issue. - Premises on both sites – budgetary considerations of on-going and new works. • Appendices, for information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aspire - Mental Health work • JV praised both Headteachers and said they were exceptional. • SH thanked JV. SH said Trustees endorse and support JV's commendation for the Headteachers. • SH enquired if a virtual Trustee meeting would be required regarding Risk Assessments ahead of September opening. Wanda Golinska (WG) said current guidance indicated this should happen. Given guidance was issued in early July, she is writing to parents now letting them know she will write to them again w/b 24th August to give latest information rather than writing and rewriting as plans change throughout the summer. It would be helpful for Trustees to scrutinise plans. JV added a parent Zoom was held this week with Linden Lodge parents, they will be given information later in the summer. DR said parents are being contacted now to determine if they will be sending their child in as medical evidence is required if not, to satisfy the DfE submission. Also plan to make a phone call to each family mid-August to get a view on their intentions. Risk Assessment will probably stay broadly similar for Linden Lodge. • SH invited questions from Trustees re CEO report. Sian Tyler (ST) enquired about a meeting with other Heads that JV had referred to at an earlier meeting and what those schools were planning. JV noted that she had been appointed the Chair of the secondary heads group. She reported that they are taking a mixture of measures e.g. rewritten timetables, bubbles although all are anticipating updated guidance late summer. Further meeting around GCSE and A Levels next year to be held. • George Dryja (GD) asked about the nursing contract and for clarification about whether it has to be renegotiated annually. JV said the new organisation taking over the contract had only been introduced to her very recently by the CCG and it was unaware of the shortcomings of the contact. JV has written to complain about the handling of the issue and that meetings are now scheduled across the summer to resolve the matter, rather than having taken place in the four months since the last meeting when nothing had moved forward. 	<p>Virtual Trustee meeting to be arranged late August for approval of schools re-opening plans</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referring to JV's external commitments outlined in the CEO report, Alexis Martinowsky (AM) asked how much time is involved in fulfilling these. JV said all were virtual at the moment – the Oxford work = 2 hours fortnightly; SEN LA Strategic Board is important to both schools and the LA is paying for two members of staff to be trained as SENCOs. In response AM indicated he would be concerned if these were taking too much time. 	
<p>7. Headteachers' Reports</p> <p>7.1 Linden Lodge</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SH asked Debbie Rix (DR) to outline the key issues/significant risks going forward: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linden Lodge has been able to do more than other special schools due to staff adaptability. While parents and staff have felt reassured by communications, the risk is that it's demonstrated to parents how challenging caring for their child is without the support of the school. This will have an impact on the next few years as parents who're struggling may want residential care. Strongest aspect of the provision is the formal i.e. where national curriculum is followed. The school is oversubscribed and will need to consider strategically what the target roll is for the next five years and also impact on premises costs of more children. This is a financial risk. On-going risk = the school population are the survivors of developments in special care baby units going back to 2002/3 when medicine changed its approach and more premature babies survived whereas they wouldn't have previously. Linden Lodge have a significant number of these children who are now entering a stage of life when they will again experience serious medical issues. DR said there have been two deaths during Covid of this cohort, with others seriously ill, but we have to ensure nursing is fit for purpose and the current proposal is a risk for this group. Balance between medical/educational needs of these students needed. Nursing provision needs careful thought and current specification disappointingly doesn't allow for this complex group. Liz Buckley (LB) asked at what point does the risk increase where it's not safe to have these children at school i.e. so the school isn't bearing this risk. DR said risk is mitigated with right resources e.g. suitable nursing. DR said it would be very difficult to tell parents their child could no longer attend school. LB said if this nursing isn't in place by September, what then? DR said it would need to go back to Annual Reviews, LA agreements and brought to the attention of LA. Responding to a question from GD, DR said nursing needs are very rarely reflected in EHCPs, although therapy usually is. JV said this is why Wandsworth is rated Requires Improvement for special needs as health and social care aspects are missing. The new strategic board has representatives from both to address this. LB said nursing situation needs to be escalated if there's no plan B. JV has written a complaint citing mismanagement of this contract and is asking for an urgent meeting with the CCG. 	

- Sarah Taylor referred to Melissa Dunn's mention of re-advertising for Health Care Assistants as no suitable applicants to date, and asked if this is an across-the-board problem and what bearing this will have on the nursing issue. DR said more targeted advertising had taken place but no impact and there is no passive recruitment in this sector, as with TAs. With the employment sector changing due to Covid, adverts will be placed to try to attract local parents, graduates etc. Hours of work will need to be changed though to accommodate parents who need to do school pick up etc.
- GD asked about DR's reference to questions over the PPE supply chain beyond September. DR said until now the LA and NHS have supplied PPE. LA is not now providing this for schools and signposted her to Amazon, which is a problem. Will continue as long as possible with NHS supply chain but this will come to an end at some point. GD said this will be difficult as everyone now needs to have PPE e.g. to go shopping.
- GD asked about page 9/10 re curriculum and what percentage of parents had uploaded work to Earwig, an online platform. DR said around 30%. Some parents struggled to access it, despite equipment being supplied, so evidence has had to be collated in other ways. Evidence of progress in summer term isn't how it should be and been done in other ways.
- GD referred to feedback from external organisations and asked if there is a possible funding stream from providing LL as a resource to other schools. DR said there is potential and should be looked at strategically. DVDs are also being produced.
- GD congratulated DR on the increase in (inaudible) from 14 to 20.
- SH referred to the Premises report and asked how the work outlined was being managed ahead of the start of the new Premises Manager. DR said he was starting next week and decisions were made by prioritisation, risk reduction, Residential Ofsted impact etc. DR has approached the charitable trust for upgrades to facilities such as sensory rooms. Charitable donations can be used for projects such as this but difficult to raise money from charities for maintenance projects.
- SH referred to the building works that Southfields Academy had gone through and asked if there was a way the expertise gained by the MAT could be used to have oversight of this area at Linden Lodge. JV said she was happy to take this on. DR said that Premises at Linden Lodge are closely linked to the academic aspect of the school and have a great impact on the success of students there. She said the new Premises Manager sounds very competent so it may be that the Charitable Trust could be used for certain projects and the Premises team carry out others, as previously they wouldn't have had capacity to do this. JV said there are two aspects:
 1. Link of Premises with Teaching & Learning re learning environment

L.L. to explore funding stream from resource production.

	<p>2. Operational side. JV said she is happy to take on 2 but may not have expertise for 1. SH said the buildings etc. are the assets of the Trust. GD noted that as systems such as Parago will now be used at both schools, it makes sense for an overview in the MAT.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sian Tyler (ST) referred to the safeguarding reports and asked if they were reflected in the risk register or whether they came out of the management structure in the risk register. DR said she thought they were in the risk but that she would double check this. - SH referred to DR's thanks and appreciation for staff in her report and said Trustees endorse this and said the work done has been impressive. LB said she agreed and enquired about time off over the summer given the amount of work that has been done. JV said there is a lot to do over the summer including: resolving nursing contract, preparation for reopening of schools in September and premises issues at both sites. JV said Linden Lodge has a Head of School and maybe something similar is required at Southfields to give Headteachers time away. LB, ahead of leaving the meeting, said she would strongly recommend time off where none has been taken. GD echoed LB's comments and said health and well-being were at risk if time away wasn't taken. SH said other senior leaders should do the same. 	<p>JV to oversee operational aspects of premises works at L.L. DR to check safeguarding reports reflected in risk register.</p> <p>JV to consider Head of School role and report to Trustees</p>
<p>7.2 Southfields Academy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SH thanked Debbie Rix and invited Wanda Golinska (WG) to highlight the main risks/challenges at Southfields and then answer questions. • WG said although a backward step had been taken as a result of the pandemic, SLT reverted to hands-on activities and had responded in rescue mission mode. Challenge now is to find a way to transition back to make the progress that would have been made for students and teachers, whose classroom-based skills won't have been developed, although they will have gained skills in other areas. • WG said the most recent challenge has been responding to the latest guidance which will be out of date by the time the Academy returns, which lacks detail and is set against a background of constant changes e.g. rules re wearing of face masks. Having looked at what other schools are doing e.g. big academy trusts, their plans seem to lack ambition and are unrealistic i.e. utilising primary-like bubbles means that teachers will have to teach outside of their subject area and we will end up with a supervisory model. Feedback to date from students and teachers who have been on site is that both groups are fed up with supervision. WG said she was not convinced academy groups who're using the bubble model have actually spoken to their staff, parents, students and unions. A significant number of our students with SEN will not be able to sit still for hours and we will be creating a new type of lockdown but at school. Much planning will need to be done between now and September, along with gathering feedback for our provision. 	

- Having heard from other school Heads, WG said that the Academy has provided a much more bespoke virtual learning platform than many other schools have been able to provide, where off-the-shelf platforms have been used. WG said her only regret is that more students haven't engaged but this has been for a variety of reasons. Overall the virtual school has been a big success. There has been a high level of engagement from students with all areas of staff including tutors, welfare etc. to ensure student mental health and well-being, as well as the academic side, is supported.
- AM acknowledged the huge amount of work done to set up the Virtual School and referred to his child's experience where teachers held a virtual meeting with children once a week and asked why this didn't happen at Southfields, other than with assemblies. WG said the only area this happened in was Sixth Form. KS3 students were not in Google Classrooms so this had to be built up and developed ahead of Easter. WG said there was going to be a push in this direction, with safeguarding in place but as other skills developed eg Screencastify, the feedback showed that in the main, those live lessons taking place were not as good as the Screencastify ones. WG said she's not convinced live lessons are superior to what teachers are developing. AM said he had observed that his child was much more engaged with live learning and felt part of a group rather than passive tasks. WG noted that the starting point in planning live lessons was that most children would watch it on their phone, as this was the only IT they had reliable access too. Also, WG said she is not ignoring live lessons and if we return to lockdown they will be part of the virtual school.
- AM, anticipating further lockdown, enquired about the plan for this. GD asked if virtual school will continue alongside normal school once normal conditions have returned. WG said plans such as reducing on-site provision/providing three hours of live lessons for the sixth form were being considered. She has also found that for homework/independent learning purposes the online platform will continue. WG noted that it will be a requirement from September for absent students to be provided with a virtual timetable from the first day of absence, in addition to teaching normal classes for students on site.
- ST asked about the recovery curriculum planning and what changes would be involved; about the new intake and how assessments of their current abilities had been made and what challenges this would involve. WG said it has been quite difficult to get feedback which is vital for planning. PSHE teachers came together with pastoral leaders including safeguarding etc. to bring together all feedback so an accurate picture of where students are could be gained. It was hard to plan a recovery curriculum without knowing this. Off the back of that a cohesive programme which will be part delivered through PSHE lessons and also tutors and an induction will be in place. A way of marrying the pastoral aspect into the curriculum is to be found.

- Regarding the new intake, WG said we have the Wandsworth test scores for most. There will be gaps – audits will be carried out of their skills and planning will be done around that. An informal assessment programme is in place to identify gaps. Teachers will also gain more information in the first weeks as they get to know the children. ST asked how this year’s cohort compared to previous years. JV said the Wandsworth test shows it’s broadly similar – 48% in lower third of low prior attainment.
- SH said John Moore had submitted questions:
 - Staff mental health: What kind of support can staff access? JV said Sarah Gray is looking at staff welfare. Individual concerns have been addressed but this is challenging as people have different anxieties. WG said there has been a lot of 1-1 time. VLN outlined some activities that have taken place e.g. our in-house mental health leads have been involved, several staff have accessed counselling provided by Wandsworth psychiatrists, there was a regular newsletter of positive events, a working at home policy and testing of the Risk Assessment each week.
 - Attendance: What action would be taken to enforce attendance as it is mandatory from September? WG said well-being sessions that had taken place involved triaging students. Similar activities will happen at the start of term but follow-up will need to take place to get some students back. WG said we don’t want to fine parents who may be going through difficult times financially but work with individuals. JV said we need to understand the reasons behind an absence and Government advice has not been helpful in this regard but if a child is absent it will be a safeguarding issue.
 - NVR scores and interventions: covered already but WG said this does enable the Academy to provide an ambitious curriculum as well as catch up. Interventions in place for EAL students as well as a wider nurture group to support students.
- AM asked about the new guidance re Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and how Trustees could be updated on this. JV said the new updates predominantly relate to mental health.
 UPDATE: The new guidance, effective September, can be found here:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/892394/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2020.pdf
 The local authority also run courses and once dates are known, Trustees will be notified.
- AM enquired about the My Child at School app and what plans there are to increase parental use of this useful tool. JV said there was higher use amongst parents of younger students and Heads of Years will be ensuring parents have log in details and it will be promoted at the return to school 1-1s in September. WG agreed that it needs development.

JV to notify Trustees re LA training dates

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ST asked about staggered starts in September. JV said Year 7s will start on Monday 7th and will be in lessons all week, while other years will be brought in a day at a time that week to go through systems etc. and will continue with virtual learning. • SH thanked WG for the report and said she had been impressed by the process the staff had gone through to evolve the system and congratulated them. WG said she would pass this on to senior staff, in particular, who had been very supportive. 	
8. Finance Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steve Elson referred to paper 4 – current year report and said the financial systems are archaic and a new system is being invested in from January. It will streamline other systems e.g. payroll. • External audit: a virtual audit has been carried out. Only one recommendation (nine last year). This will be distributed once finalised. • SE said the variances are correct. Covid hasn't had a massive effect. Some discussions with LA re Linden Lodge's top up funding. We think this year it will be as expected. • SE referred to next year's budget, which goes to the DfE, and said both schools would break even. Pricing/budget of Linden Lodge to be looked at. Responding to previous question from GD, more money is needed from Local Authority. Southfields Academy simpler in that numbers of students is increasing (c.210 expected in September with each child = £7k). More staff will be needed but five year plan optimistic as numbers expected to settle at around 200 each year for new Year 7 intake. Site costs are a consideration for the budget. • SE asked for next year's forecast to be approved so this could be submitted. SH asked if the budget plan is to be approved. SE said the appendix budget is the one to be approved. • AM, referring to £7m held in bank, and queried the interest rate. SE said there are two deposit accounts that mature alternate years. The one that matures next year will give the interest shown in the budget, not both accounts. • GD thanked SE for the reply re top-up funding and said the five year plan budget shows top-up funding at Linden Lodge going up by 16% across four years. GD says that's a big increase and prior to Covid was achievable but not in the current climate so has concerns that the plan is very optimistic and that other funding opportunities should be looked at e.g. virtual school marketing etc. SE outlined staff increase funding and said High Needs funding should be separate from any cutbacks as it is not collected via council tax and should therefore be protected. • ST, asking about income, referred to the nursery and the swimming school and asked if those businesses close if there is a plan to replace with other contracts. SE said nursery is successful and he is not concerned about it but believes more income could be generated if we were to run the swimming school rather than the current company so its loss would not be damaging. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SH asked all to indicate a “thumbs up” if they approve the 20/21 budget plan. Approval given. SH thanked SE. 	
9. MAT Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No business. 	
10. AOB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ST asked for positives that had arisen from the Covid situation and how these might be carried forward into the future. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WG said the virtual school and working from home, as with wider society, were two elements. She said we will learn a lot more in coming months about how education will need to shift rather than to return to where it was. WG said she would like to try to influence that but the official pronouncements refer to a return to normal i.e. how things were previously, which is not ideal. - DR said parental engagement – much more evidence of it; project management – workforces coming together to send up virtual learning for blind, disabled children has shown impact of this and united the workforce as well as raising morale/well-being. Also being able to evidence that we can teach and deliver many things remotely and effectively by engaging parents e.g. remote therapy. This is reflected in satisfaction rates as parents are involved rather than it taking place at school where they can’t participate. 	
11. Confidential items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	
12. Upcoming meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SH thanked all for attending and referred to the need to have a meeting (virtual or via email) to approve the Risk Assessment and opening plans over the summer followed by a possible face-to-face meeting next term. Upcoming dates for meetings to be sent out. • JV thanked all Trustees for their support and said she was appreciative of having such an intelligent and well-resourced Trustee Board. • SH closed the meeting. 	

