

INCLUSIVE | MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

MINUTES for the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE INCLUSIVE MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

held on the 9th December 2021 at 6pm via Zoom

ATTENDEES	<u>Members</u> Natalie Dalvarez Jonathan Hartley Nick Martin Jill Steward <u>Trustees</u> Andrew Chappell Claire Edwards Daniel Finill Elizabeth Leeman Elizabeth Redman James Roach <u>Prospective Trustees</u> Morgan Bone Martin Goodman Liz Jones Sanjay Mazumder
APOLOGIES	<u>Trustees</u> Efuru Obua <u>Prospective Trustees</u> Camilla Castro Sally Newing
IN ATTENDANCE	Elizabeth Wicks - Auditor from Hillier Hopkins <u>Central team</u> Lizzie Butler - SENCo Sharon Carlyon (COO) – Company secretary, COO, CFO Michelle Connell - SENDIT Sarah Hamilton – Finance manager Emma Lad – Clerk

Signed (Chair):

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	<p><u>BFS</u></p> <p>Lesly Adams – Chair BFS Iram Ali – Phase leader Evie Davies – Pupil of BFS (Presenting) Ruth Davies – Evie Davies Mum – Beechfield parent Jessica Essex – Phase leader Emily Fuller – Phase leader Alison Hayward – Pastoral Team Leader Gillian Jackson – HT BFS Rachel Morgan – Phase Leader Tanya Mortlock – BFS Assistant HT</p> <p><u>CTS</u></p> <p>Emma Hill – Assistant HT Mark Scoulding – Vice-chair CTS Cheska Tyler – HT CTS Jennie Reynard – Assistant HT Gemma Williamson – Chair CTS</p> <p><u>LHS</u></p> <p>Darren Armoogun - Governor Jo Ball – Assistant HT Gemma Banks – Phase leader Michael Dobner – Chair LHS Nicola Furey – Pastoral team Seb Gray – HT LHS Louise Goss – Phase leader Olivia Gunner – Phase leader Yasamin Rose – Phase leader Denise Shaw – Governor</p>
DOCUMENTS CIRCULATED PRIOR TO THE MEETING	<p>Agenda Audited accounts: DRAFT Accounts final, Audit finding document</p>
PRESENTATIONS/ DOCUMENTS SHARED AT THE MEETING	<p>PowerPoint presentation – AGM 2021-22 Videos of Lawrence and Sophie, pupils at CTS Videos of Adama and Runako, pupils at LHS</p>
	<p>Beechfield School – BFS Cherry Tree School – CTS Laurance Haines School – LHS</p>

The meeting started at

No.	ITEM
1	<p>Welcome and Introductions</p> <p>The Chair of the Trust welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance. Meeting etiquette was explained.</p>
2	<p>Apologies for absence and acceptance of those absences</p> <p>Apologies were sent by Camilla Castro, Efuru Obua and Sally Newing.</p>

Signed (Chair):

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The Chair of Trustees update and review of the year

- Covid Continues!

The Trust continued to operate in the difficult and challenging circumstances of a pandemic. The leadership team continued to be agile in the face of the 'new normal' during the year which was a real success. There was a high frequency of guidance issued from the DFE often last minute and the Trust was able to respond quickly as a result of the collaboration across the schools.

 - Collaborative working

Both staff and parents have praised the schools as evidenced in the report. Working with staff and collecting their input strengthened the Trusts response and ensured staff safety which was critical.
 - Supporting our more vulnerable community

It was key to support the vulnerable members of the community both pastorally and educationally. The Trustees supported the Trust executive to ensure all children had connectivity with the provision of laptops.
 - Communication

150 key worker children and vulnerable children attended the school while there was also online provision. One of the strengths was a single mouth piece for the Trust. Ongoing consultation with staff about their welfare was key. Pupils were able to contact each other which was appreciated. Social media and press coverage continued to raise the Trust profile.
- Nurture at our core

The Trust was the first in the country to achieve the National Nurturing Schools Award across all schools. It was a great public recognition that nurture is at the heart of the Trust and the work completed to improve the schools offer.
- Infrastructure

We have improved infrastructure following successful capital improvement fund bids. CTS was a large project which was a real success.
- Our people
 - The Trust continues to invest in training and development to ensure teachers have the high skills to support pupils and to support their career development.
 - There is now a new HR provider as part of the People Strategy.
 - The new HT at CTS was welcomed, Cheska Tyler.
 - Across the Trust there has been recruitment of NQT's.
 - A new finance manager, Sarah Hamilton joined the Trust.
 - New governors and Trustees have been recruited.
- Governance
 - A thorough review of the Schedule of Delegation has taken place.
 - A Community and Standards Committee is now in place. The Resources Committee matured into its role.
 - We aim to further develop the role and impact of the members and termly meetings are proposed in the new year.
 - A full governance review will take place to meet new ESFA requirements.
- Our pupils

In the absence of data, benchmarking pupil progress has been a challenge. Pupils when they returned to schools were assessed academically and pastorally.
- Pupil numbers

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	<p>Pupil numbers continue to be a concern due to falling numbers as a result of the drop in preschool and reception aged children locally. The budgeting is cautious and reflects the changes in income from falling numbers on roll. The Trust is working hard to make the Trust schools the schools of choice. We are financially sustainable with strong reserves.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability and the future We believe we are in a strong position to continue our development as a sustainable Trust. The appointment of a new Secretary of State seems to be positive in support of academy trusts going forward. We have been able to support each other better than many standalone primary schools during the pandemic. <p>And finally.....</p> <p>Thank you to Sharon, Sarah and the team for working hard to complete a “clean” audit. This is a reflection of how well our controls work and in which our systems and processes have become embedded.</p> <p>Personal and Trust Board thanks to the Leadership team, all our staff, governors, volunteers, Trustees and Members who all contribute to live the beliefs and promises of the Inclusive MAT.</p>
3	<p>CEO to present the National Nurturing Schools Awards</p> <p>The CEO apologised that the meeting is not face to face but due to Covid concerns this was not possible.</p> <p>Links to videos were available in the chat should they not work during the meeting.</p> <p>LHS became the first school in the country to gain the National Nurturing Schools Award and was re-accredited in 2021 BFS and CTS have now also received the Award which makes the Inclusive MAT the first MAT in the country to achieve the Nurturing Schools Award.</p> <p>The CEO congratulated the HT’s and staff on the award but in particular thanked Alison Hayward at BFS, Jennie Ranyard at CTS and Nicola Furey at LHS for all their work as Pastoral Leads. They have driven the work for this at the schools and it is a life changing piece of work which improves lives for the schools families.</p>
4	<p>Introduce Evie a pupil from BFS – Sustainability</p> <p>The HT at BFS welcomed Evie to the meeting who is in year 4.</p> <p>Evie explained she is proud to be autistic and what this means for her. She represented the Watford area at the first UK children’s parliament where 650 children represented their constituency from across the UK. The Children’s Parliament presented quotes and remarks to take to the COP26 summit. The children were calling for action and Evie was able to present a speech asking leaders to ensure the world has net zero carbon emissions by 2050.</p> <p>The CEO thanked Evie for her presentation and the challenge to ensure the Trust meets the net zero carbon emissions target.</p>
5	<p>Presentation and acceptance of the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year ending 31st August 2021</p> <p>The Chair of Trustees introduced Elizabeth Wicks Auditor for Hillier Hopkins.</p> <p>Elizabeth Wicks presented a verbal explanation of the accounts alongside the presentation of the Final Accounts Audit findings document.</p>

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Questions/ Comments from the attendees:

What headline and performance materiality figures did you use?

Auditors do not share the figures as it could be used to hide future activity and actions but we can discuss privately.

Did the main estimated figures (PPE and Pensions) pose any additional challenge with the revision of ISA540 (estimates)?

On the whole no, we are robust with estimates. The revision to the ISA has brought it all to one place. Information in different areas, the various elements of understanding the different entity, the scalability, the risk assessment have been brought together and we now have individual working papers for estimates. We benchmark pensions and benchmark against other academies. There has been an enhancement to the process but no challenges.

Did you have to carry out any additional procedures because of Covid?

Not really in terms of audit testing. The main changes to income streams are covered through income testing. Expenditure is reviewed as normal. The additional procedures are related to us coming to site.

The assumption that we are government backed, means it is not a concern?

We look at going concern and revision to ISA's as we have separate processes. Cash flows and forecasts are reviewed. We have comfort that we are government backed but we do review the accounts to ensure appropriately balanced. The accounts and reserves are healthy for an academy trust and so there is no concern noted.

The pensions liability figures are very volatile, increasing by £1.7m in year. What assurance do you get to 'validate' our figures?

We have reliance on experts, we look at ISA 620. Do they have competence, capability and objectivity. Hymens Robertson are your actuary and we look at their qualifications. We look at the assumptions, CPI rate and life expectancy elements to the assessment and evaluate against the stock market, bonds and ONS data. We assess against the figures to ensure they are sensible. From the work this year everything is ok.

You have not rebutted the revenue recognition risk. I wondered why not given the nature of our income streams, and there being greater scope to manipulate expenditure (referred to in PN10)?

There are two key risks, management override and income recognition. You can rebut if you think they are not appropriate to the entity. This has been debated throughout the years. Income comes from the government and should be low risk. The risk is not the typical grants but the cut off, capital funding and any unusual one off grants.

With CIF funding, it is treated as income, which is low risk?

The risk is whether it has it been picked up at all. CIF can be allocated at year end but doesn't come in until September and so it is not recorded. The amounts can be material and so we have it as a key risk. Other income, there is scope for error but it is smaller amounts and the controls in place are sufficient to pick it up. The expenditure could be manipulated, it is likely to be in smaller amounts so you would need a high volume and you would need a deficiency in control which has not been found.

Do you do much work on journal entries?

We take the journal reports and we pick up and question with Sharon and Sarah what they are and the controls around it. We have a robust working paper on journals and management override.

Are you using data analytics on journals?

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	<p>We use an excel spreadsheet which picks up the journals which are unexpected not a formal data analytics software. This meets the needs with regard to those parameters.</p> <p>In terms of operating leases, where are with leases on balance sheet? For IRFS102 that's not happening yet. There is a movement towards IRFS where they would be capitalised but at the moment it is not coming in for the Trust.</p> <p>The Chair and CEO explained that there have been a release of reserves in 2021/22 to support capital works within the three schools due to the good budgetary management.</p> <p>The CEO thanked Elizabeth and the team for all their work. A fantastic year.</p> <p>The accounts for 2020-21 were approved by the Members with no objections.</p>
6	<p>Introduction and sharing of pupil videos – Lawrence and Sophie from CTS</p> <p>CTS HT, Cheska Tyler, explained that the two videos show the new year 6 school leaders. The school had elected a head boy and girl previously, however once elected the children discussed the roles and felt that the 'Head Boy' and 'Head Girl' title were not representative of the children in the school.</p> <p>Lawrence and Sophie will be leading the Children's Parliament in the school. Lawrence's video outlined why he would like to become a school leader and was used in the whole school election process. Sophies video is a hello to all attendees of the AGM.</p> <p>The video's unfortunately did not work. The CEO shared links to them so the attendees could download and watch on their devices.</p> <p>They can also be accessed here: click here to view videos by Members, Trustees and governors.</p> <p>The CEO thanked Lawrence and Sophie for their videos and their hard work</p>
7	<p>CEO Reflections on academic year 2020/21</p> <p>Presentation of the PowerPoint presentation – AGM 2021-22</p> <p>The CEO revisited the beliefs and promises for the Trust:</p> <p>We believe that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • happy children learn • happy staff thrive • happy parents build a community <p>We promise that children in the Inclusive Multi Academy Trust will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feel welcome, valued and safe • develop outstanding academic and social skills • have fun whilst fostering an intrinsic love of learning • respect and celebrate everyone's similarities and differences • build lasting, healthy relationships and support networks • engage with and contribute substantially to their local community <p>The pandemic has brought the schools together as a Trust and showed how being in a Trust and collaborating has been key.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been an increase in staff over the year from 179 to 199 staff members, this reflects the need in the Trust and the increase in children who require support with

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specific needs.

- The Trust has also grown in the number of pupils on roll. The Executive team and Marketing Manager have worked hard to become the school and Trust of choice for the community. The improving numbers are also a positive as the number of pupils, over the last two years, in Watford have been declining as mentioned by the chair.
- Recruitment is difficult across education at present and it is particularly difficult in Watford as across the border you can receive London weighting increasing staff salaries. However, the Trust started and finished the year with a full complement of staff.
- Professional development has been a key focus for the year. The Trust has achieved best value for training by staff attending together, inviting each other to hosted training and sharing training feedback across the schools.
- The Capital Improvement projects worth £2.75 million have been completed. Well done to the new HT, Cheska Tyler, as she has managed the project and the pandemic in her first year as a HT. The staff, children and families now have a much improved school. Projects were also completed at the other schools.
- There are 15 mental health first aiders in the schools and the schools are mental health hubs for the local area.
- Eight Newly Qualified Teachers joined the Trust last year and continue a trend of growing Trust staff. Seven of the members of staff are still working with the Trust. They are real assets to the settings.
- A Trust staff bulletin is now in place to try and strengthen the communication.
- Collaborative and focus groups have taken place even with the pandemic. The HT's, Assistant HT's, Pastoral Team and SEN team have all met regularly to review and share good practice. The collaboration between curriculum leaders has also taken off this year. The peer to peer reviews of the schools allowed the HT's and CEO to review each school for a day in a non-threatening collaborative way. The NQT's and RQT's have had a bespoke training programme led by Lizzie Butler, the SENCo, which allowed them to learn in their own schools and see practice in the other Trust schools.
- The International schools award was achieved, congratulations to Gina Cox, who although now moved on has left us in a strong position at CTS.
- Reaccreditation of the Green Flag Eco Schools Award has focused on the eco message and is driven by Monika Delginova at LHS.
- The School and Trust websites have been enhanced with videos which allow visitors to see parents, children and staff proudly talking about the schools thank you to Laura Springate for her hard work on this.
- Alison Hayward completed a sky dive in aid of the Salvation Army.
- Three members of staff were awarded local hero awards by the Watford Mayor for their work during the pandemic.
- Numerous Trust competitions have taken place including children taking part in the London Marathon. Cheska Tyler, CTS HT completed the London marathon and all children across the Trust took part in the mini London marathon.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brass band England are working with the Trust and have funded opportunities for children who wouldn't usually pick up a brass instrument. There will be a Trust band and there have been two proms in the playground concerts. • Covid has had an impact but it has brought us together. The Trust collaborated to share the burden which has reduced the impact for the schools. There were three covid support hotlines in place during the lock downs, run by the Pastoral Leads, and they supported the community with a variety of issues including food parcels. • The CEO thanked parents for their support during online learning. The school staff were brilliant during the lock down and supported children both in school and online with their learning. The children received a good education during lock down and numerous parents have thanked us for our support. • About 12% of Trust families were not connected to the internet before the pandemic. The government gave schools a number of devices but the Trust also went to local businesses and over 100 devices were given out to families. There were also routers, dongles and Wi-Fi connectivity devices given to families. This is an ongoing piece of work for the Trust to maintain the connectivity. • The curriculum recovery plan has been a huge piece of work. The Pastoral Team, SENCo and school leaders created the plan which was shared with every NQT across the county and to other local schools during the lock down. • The LHS HT took part in a broadcast question and answer session with the Watford Mayor relating to the challenges facing teachers and online learning. • BFS was visited by the Prime Minister at the beginning of the pandemic. Whilst not everyone thought it was a good idea it was an opportunity to talk to him about the concerns of the families.
8	<p>Introduction and sharing of pupil videos – Adama and Runako from LHS</p> <p>The HT of LHS explained that Adama and Runako were part of a project talking about growing up black in Watford and relating their experiences.</p> <p>The video's unfortunately did not work. The CEO shared links to them so the attendees could download and watch on their devices.</p> <p>They can also be accessed here: click here to view videos by Members, Trustees and governors.</p> <p>The CEO thanked the children for their reports and talked about the responsibility the Trust has to provide possibilities for all children whilst also protecting them.</p>
9	<p>CEO Plans for 2021/22</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coronavirus – as discussed this has been unifying for the Trust. • New Secretary of State for Education – White Paper The new secretary of State for Education has made it clear that attendance is high on his agenda but is also aware of the difficulties with covid absence at its current levels. The White Paper also talks about the need for schools to work as collaboratively strong groups which is also a priority for the Trust. • Sustainability

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Evie has explained the need for sustainability and to manage climate change. The draft strategy released by the Secretary of State ([Click here to read](#)) means there is a real need for schools to work towards net zero carbon emissions.

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
 - The Trusts mantra is 'You see me, You hear me, I belong'.
 - All children and staff should feel that they belong. Children should be represented by the adults in the schools and feel that school is a safe space where they can be who they want to be.
- Appetite for growth
The CEO explained the Trust needs to grow going forward and this will be a focus for this year.

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Questions from those in attendance – to be tabled in advance by emailing clerk@inclusivemat.co.uk

Do we have a carbon reduction policy in place?

At present there is a sustainability policy which is based on curriculum targets. The guidance was released at the end of November 2021 which includes a timeline. The Trust Executive will be following this timeline and ensuring all necessary policies are in place. Next year there will be an update at the AGM on the progress made.

The Leadership of the Trust does not seem to reflect the community we serve. What are we doing to address this?

This is common in education and something the Trust board is working to address. The recent recruitment of Trustees has improved representation. LHS school is also part of a project with HCC which has partnered the school with three other schools in the county to try and establish common goals for this area.

The LHS HT explained that the school wants to allow for a safe and brave space where staff can talk about racism. This year there has been and will continue to be a monthly forum for Trust staff; curriculum review across the schools to allow for improved representation; training and analysis of recruitment and retention.

The Trust needs to allow for opportunities to feel available with clear paths to show how to progress and equity for staff to be fast tracked to leadership. This is a five to ten year project which the Trust is proud to be part of and will allow for a long term legacy in the schools. The CEO explained recruitment processes have been improved to reduce unconscious bias.

How are we going to monitor progress and improvement around Equality, Diversity and Inclusion?

An external review has been completed and this will be carried out again to mark the progress made within the Trust and next steps.

What next steps will the Inclusive MAT take to celebrate the unique contributions of the three schools and also enhance collective working?

We continually celebrate the uniqueness of the three schools. Career pathways and training have been established as part of the People Strategy led by the COO which allow staff to develop and stay with the Trust whilst moving between the schools.

Each school has a different character. How can they be shared and enhanced?

Collaborative working is key as it has brought opportunities for each of the schools to show their character. Subject leaders review and support each other's work which allows for the sharing of best practice and enhancement of the opportunities at each school.

One of the key responsibilities of the members is to appoint Trustees so the Trust can achieve its purpose and fulfil its objectives. How do the Inclusive MAT members know if the Trust is achieving its purpose - What is the criteria we measure ourselves against to assess this and how do we report this?

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	<p>The Chair of Trustees explained that alongside the AGM reporting annually there will be meetings with Members termly where there can be a formal mechanism for information sharing. The Trust Plan can be reviewed at each meeting allowing for Members to measure, judge and hold the Trustees to account. This coincides with the DFE and ESFA requesting more Member involvement and also supports the aim of the Trust to improve communication.</p> <p>The Members now have their own page on Governor Hub which allows for specific information to be shared. Members can also see there is good financial management of the Trust from the report this evening. At present attainment and progress data, attendance and Ofsted reports cannot be used which makes the monitoring more difficult for Members.</p> <p>We are losing some of the 'flavour' of the Trust through having an individual page. At the Members meeting can we discuss what is shared with us in future? The Chair of Trustees confirmed this can be reviewed.</p> <p>Members all agreed the termly meeting would be beneficial and allow for enhanced monitoring and understanding.</p> <p>What does the highlighted section below refer to from the NGA guidance doc for members?</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">If the members are not satisfied that the trust board is effective, then they will need to step in. If there has not been an external review in any one three year period, the members should direct the trust board to convene one. If the trust is underperforming, and the members cannot see evidence that the trustees have the capacity to ensure improvement, the members should seriously consider if they need to appoint different, or additional trustees.</p> <p>The Trust is carrying out an in depth external review of governance next term with the Confederation of Schools. This will be reported to all levels of governance.</p>
11	<p>Any other business</p> <p>The Chair thanked everyone for their contribution to the meeting and all staff for their hard work throughout what has been a difficult year.</p>

The meeting ended at: 7.45pm