

Virtual Meeting of the Board of Directors

30th November 2021 at 4.30pm via TEAMS

Present: Mrs J Birch, Mr P Bowers, Mr P Bowman, Rev S Douglas, Mr T Field (Chair),
Mrs F Hayward, Mr P Hawthorne, Mr D Napier

In Attendance: Mrs S Varricchione - Birches First School
Mrs V Buckley – Estates Manager
Mrs R Connelly- MAT SENCO
Mr B Hetherington – Bishop Fleming
Ms P Tortoishell - Clerk

No.	Item
1	<p>Apologies and Attendance:</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Miss J Parker</p>
2	<p>Membership and Vacant Posts</p> <p>It is noted that a prospective Director has met with the Chair and DN to discuss expectations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ruth Wake, who has worked in schools and has marketing expertise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Members have been notified and CH has confirmed that he approves the appointment of RW – the Chair is to follow up with MJ and CECET • LH's (Safeguarding) post has not been replaced <p>Resolved: i) that Directors give their approval to the appointment of RW ii) that the CEO is to confirm the appointment of Tony Wynn-Jones as a Member iii) that Directors are asked to continue to reach out for new Directors / Members</p>
3	<p>Declaration of Business Interests:</p> <p>No declarations were made for any items on the agenda and the OD confirmed that all Directors had completed their Declarations of interest Forms.</p>
4	<p>Minutes of Previous Meeting</p> <p>Resolved: i) that the minutes of the CMAT Board meeting of 6th July 2021 be approved as a true and accurate account of the meeting ii) that the minutes of the Extra-ordinary CMAT Board meeting of 15th July 2021 be approved as a true and accurate account of the meeting</p>
	<p>Matters Arising:</p> <p>Companies House and the ESFA are to be notified of the new Directors <i>It is noted that JB needs to be added</i></p> <p>Directors are to contact TF/DN if they know of anyone interested in taking up one of the vacant posts <i>This item is ongoing.</i></p> <p>Future reports are to include information on vulnerable pupils from LABs. <i>This item is ongoing</i></p>

	<p>Building and Health and Safety are to be included in the Estates Report at all future meetings <i>This item is ongoing</i></p> <p>Estates and Safeguarding are to be standing agenda items at all CMAT Board meetings <i>This item is ongoing</i></p> <p>The Board are to review the number of SEN pupils and SEN provision across the MAT <i>It is noted that the report is to be considered at a future date</i></p> <p>A schedule of meetings is to be established and LH informed of the LAB meeting dates <i>This item in no longer applicable</i></p> <p>The OD will arrange for John Burdett to carry out the H&S audit with a clear brief of what's required (FH to also be involved) <i>Item completed</i></p> <p>An internal audit of H&S it to take place by 31st August 2021 <i>Item completed</i></p> <p>By the next Board meeting CMAT is to be fully compliant with the evidence to support compliance <i>CMAT will be fully compliant by 13th December 2021</i></p> <p>The OD will speak to LR about the concerns with the SCR <i>Item completed</i></p> <p>LH is to develop a one page outline for CMAT/LAB safeguarding processes <i>This item will be taken forward by the Heads and LABs</i></p> <p>Level 1 Safeguarding training needs are to be identified – to take place by December 2021 <i>Item completed</i></p> <p>A clerk is to be appointed to the LABs <i>Item carried forward</i></p> <p>TF/DN/PB/PH will continue to work on the Growth Plan strategy over the summer 2021 <i>Item completed</i></p> <p>Schools will extrapolate how much has been spent on SEN children over the past two years to ascertain staffing requirements for the future <i>Item completed</i></p> <p>Chair to notify Members of the postponed AGM and write to all staff, on behalf of the Board, to thank them for all their hard work over the past year <i>Item carried forward</i></p>
5	<p>Estates Update - VB</p> <p>Health and Safety Management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audits and Evaluations • Statutory Testing and Compliance • Fire Safety • Electrical Testing • Water Testing • Asbestos • Health and Safety Training <p>Premises Inspection Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External • Grounds Related Issues • Internal:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cleaning ○ Site Staff/Caretaking ○ Catering ○ Other Works ● Covid update ● Covid Risk Assessments <p>Review of Accidents and Hazard Reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Accidents Reported ● First Aid and Administration of Medicines <p>Fire Safety:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chubb has recently been to all 3 schools to carry out extinguisher inspections and any replacements have been actioned <p>Risk Assessments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Risk Assessments are in place for significant risks and are reviewed and updated as necessary ● Educational visits are Risk Assessed by nominated school staff and overseen by an Educational Visits Co-Ordinator ● Individual Risk Assessments are carried out for staff when the need arises <p>Building Construction and Building Contractors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Health and safety documentation is in place for building work and contractors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Including the sharing and signing of Asbestos Registers and a Contractors Declaration confirming sight of the Asbestos Survey <p>Current CIF Bids:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SNFS and BFS Roofing ● CMS Heating & Mechanical <p>VB added that she has been working with Entrust to get TAMS fully populated and up-to-date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Current compliance = 70% with some work in progress and some non-compliant and awaiting external checks – e.g. asbestos at CMS, water hygiene at BFS and SNFS ● There are no non-compliance items that will close the schools ● All schools have good evidence of emergency planning – to be input into TAMS <p>Directors Challenge:</p> <p>Would it be useful to separate any liabilities for Directors? Directors need to know that CMAT is 100% compliant.</p> <p>A. The Ofsted list can be reviewed to identify any Director liabilities. It is noted that some of the non-compliant items are school policies</p> <p>Directors are concerned that they may be culpable for things that they have no control over and it is unacceptable that Directors may be exposed.</p> <p>Resolved: i) that VB be thanked for her report – presented by the OD in VB’s absence ii) that VB will check TAMS for any filters that can identify quickly any non-compliant items by school iii) that VB will circulate a statement of compliance to Directors by 6th December 2021</p>
6	<p>SEN Update by Ruth Connolly</p> <p>RC is the CMS SENCO but is now contracted to work one day per week across the MAT and has already made a significant impact. To date RC has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Amended the curriculum offer ● Increased the level of one-to-one support due to EHCP pupils ● Submitted an application for another EHCP ● Raised an open case with the SEND Hub ● Contacted external agencies for speech and language, adult other than the teacher support, educational psychologist and paediatrician ● Opened communication with Heads and school based SENCOs and now has regular meetings ● Introduced GL Assessments in Year 4 – and now in Year 3

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Paper based alternatives raised with identified pupils ● Arranged GL training for teachers ● Raised questions over EHCPs ● Planned intervention packages to be rolled out to pupils ● Organised observations of phonics lessons ● Planned learning walks at BFS <p>Data – 100 is where pupils need to be to make expected progress:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>English</th> <th>Maths</th> <th>English/SEN</th> <th>Maths/SEN</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>CMS Year 5</td> <td>104.3</td> <td>100.6</td> <td>84.27</td> <td>81.27</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BFS Year 4</td> <td>105.84</td> <td>97.8</td> <td>82.2</td> <td>81.4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SNFS Year 4</td> <td>101.1</td> <td>95.2</td> <td>86.0</td> <td>87.0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Future Plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase the profile of GL Assessment ● To impact teaching via an increase level of informed recommendations ● Regular visits to schools to support deliver <p>Directors wish to thank RC for all the hard work she has put in the cross-MAT SENCO role.</p> <p>Resolved: that RC be thanked for her report and updates</p>		English	Maths	English/SEN	Maths/SEN	CMS Year 5	104.3	100.6	84.27	81.27	BFS Year 4	105.84	97.8	82.2	81.4	SNFS Year 4	101.1	95.2	86.0	87.0
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7	<p>Accounts Update (Bishop Fleming)</p> <p>BH outlined a review of the last 3 months work completed on behalf of the MAT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● BF had been commissioned to bring structure to the finance procedures and accounts ● The main work began September 2021 ● It is noted that the situation was better than expected with fewer concerns than were initially thought ● A new accounting system has been set up ● Last year's report has been input into the new system ● Produced September and October financial reports – with the caveat that they are dependent on the outcome of the Audit Report ● Systems and roles have been reviewed ● Concerns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Missing transactions that have historically been completed on a cash basis ○ BF is challenging this, but a new system may take some time to embed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Currently difficult with JH being on long term sick – expected to return in the new year, 2022 <p>Directors Challenges:</p> <p>Directors have been concerned with the accuracy of the accounts. Will Directors have accurate management accounts that will enable the Board to hold the schools to account?</p> <p>A. BF have not been part of the budget setting for 2021/2022, but BH has spoken to JB and the accounts are to be re-assessed after the first quarter. BH and JB are to visit each of the Headteachers to discuss budgets and staff and re-forecast to the year end. BF will support the budget setting for 2022/2023 prior to the year end.</p> <p>How will any irregularity submissions be reported?</p> <p>A. BH and JB have reviewed the bank and pay reconciliations, and all appears to be fine, which in turn means that Directors can start to rely on the data submitted. BH and the OD will carry out reconciliations for November/December 2021.</p> <p>Is there anything the Board can do to support BF?</p> <p>A. Not currently. The financial admin support person is very thorough.</p> <p>How much of the Finance role is not being completed?</p> <p>A. Approximately 15% – 20%, but BF are attempting to close the gap.</p> <p>Is the MAT having proper accounting periods?</p>																				

	<p>A. The OD is currently setting closing dates on the new system and this will have to continue on the return of JH.</p> <p>Included in the WR reports – see agenda number 8 – reference is made to the words planning and strategic. It would be beneficial if the Board could plan educational strategy policies for the future?</p> <p>A. That is part of BF’s plan – streamlining everything now to ensure everything runs smoothly and then planning can start to take place with more certainty – the building blocks are being put in place. Planning includes development of a Board financial pack to include relevant information. The schools will have the finite detail and comparisons will be completed on previous years costs.</p> <p>Is the MAT spending more than the income?</p> <p>A. The MAT is currently earning more than it is spending, but it is prudent to wait until all checks have been completed. The CEO added that the Headteachers will interrogate each other and look at long term savings.</p> <p>Resolved: i) that BH be thanked for his updates ii) that Directors can contact BH via the Chair if they have any further questions or concerns</p>
8	<p>Finance Update</p> <p>OD Report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Academy Chart of Accounts financial system with all back log issues resolved by 31st October 2021, with thanks to JH, LR and JB • Delay in the provision of the Year End Packs which S4S were contracted to do – received on 14th November 2021 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This has had a knock-on effect to the work Bishop Fleming were able to do, the End of Year Audit by WR Partners and the provision of the Management Accounts for July 2021 and August 2021 • The CMAT Hub moved to a newly refurbished office on 22nd September 2021, but restricted to 4 members of staff • Finance Manager on long term sick following an operation, expected to return January 2022 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Temporary Finance Assistant hours increased to 3 days per week to support day to day activities • Audit and Returns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Internal Audit by Telford & Wrekin Council Policy & Governance Team ○ Interim Audit by WR Partners ○ Year End Audit by WR Partners – report due by 13th December 2021 ○ Companies House Statutory Return completed ○ DfE Managing Asbestos in Schools completed and submitted ○ Staffordshire County Council Net Capacity Assessment completed and submitted ○ ESFA Land & Building Collection Tool completed and submitted ○ ESFA Land & Building Collection Tool prepared and submitted with thanks to DN ○ Statutory Compliance – see Estates Report • External Accounting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bishop Fleming (BF) took over the work from S4S as our Accountants with effect from 1st September 2021 • HR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staffing Budget on Access <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ After communications with Entrust in October 2021 all staffing for 21/22 needs to be checked and/or uploaded / deleted in accordance with current contracts and salaries for all three schools ○ HR Policies and Procedures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Procedures for recruitment continue to be a concern and need to be updated ○ Single Central Record <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ongoing concerns and awaiting a report from Capita HR inspection 26th November 2021

- School workforce Census
 - Ongoing due to issues with IT - due by 5th December 2021
- Teachers Pay
 - Details of the teachers' pay to be released to Payroll once the Headteacher performance managements have all been completed
- Policies for Review and Approval:
 - Annual Leave
 - Anti- Fraud and Corruption
 - Disaster Recovery
 - Lone Working
 - Procurement and Tendering

Consolidated October 2021 Management Accounts:

- Income year to date = £1,015,353
- Expenditure year to date = £967,135
- Surplus year to date = £48,218
- Projected deficit at 31st August 2022 = -£88,254

Interim Audit Report from WR– 1st January 2021 to 31st August 2021:

1. Purpose and scope
2. Consideration of regularity
3. Overall compliance assessment
 - Two Red Anomalies - Accounting and Reporting and Banking and Cash - Controls and processes not all operating effectively – some deficiencies noted
 - Two Amber Anomalies – Expenditure and Payroll - Controls and processes largely operating effectively with exceptions
4. Compliance assessment - matters arising and recommendations
5. Compliance assessment – follow-up of interim 1
6. Other matters arising
 - No tender was carried out for the ski trip, the school used their usual supplier which is used by numerous schools for this type of trip. There is a nil impact on accounts this year as the trip was cancelled. Going forward, the Trust needs to ensure best value for money.
7. Detailed testing and results
 - Income and Banking - Overall Compliance Assessment = Red:
 - Controls and processes not all operating effectively – some deficiencies noted
 - Expenditure and Payroll – Overall Compliance Assessment = Amber:
 - Controls and processes largely operating effectively with minor exceptions

JB expressed her concerns on the Interim Report re basic financial procedures that should have been done. JB plans to meet with JH on her return to work to discuss further and will meet with the CEO to review the payroll concerns. JB also needs to see a copy of the Year End Audit.

Internal Scrutiny Draft Report from WR:

- Recommendations:
 - The roles and responsibilities of the Trust Board / Trustees, its committees, the Executive Leader and other staff in relation to financial decision-making may not be understood or consistently followed
 - The trust board and trustees, the Executive Leader Headteacher, Chief Financial Officer and other staff are likely to compromise the impartiality of the school and themselves
 - Executive leaders and other key staff are unable to maintain financial control by not reviewing the current financial position and taking remedial action if necessary on a periodic basis
 - The board does not have a framework for ensuring all categories of risk are being adequately identified, reported and managed
 - The trustees have not ensured the trust hold all required policies and other guidance and therefore the trust may not be complying with Department for Education's statutory requirements. The trustees have not ensured the trust hold

	<p>all required policies and other guidance and therefore the trust may not be complying with Department for Education's statutory requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The trust have not got a counter fraud plan and fraud risk register which is up to date and shared with staff <p>Resolved: i) that the OD be thanked for his report and updates ii) that the reviewed policies be approved</p>
<p>9</p>	<p>LAB meetings updates Birches Teaching and Learning LAB Meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Spotlight on Maths ○ Review of Maths and Humanities Policy ○ Sport Premium Plan agreed ○ Pupil baselines and target setting ○ SDP Objectives ○ AOB: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EYFS Curriculum and training ▪ Phonics and handwriting schemes ▪ Remote offer ▪ Reviews <p>St Nicholas summary: Teaching and Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ End of year data – attainment and progress ○ SDP priorities ○ Staff development ○ Royal Society of Chemistry award for JP (Science Lead) ○ Curriculum and music provision ○ Maths ○ Policy reviews ○ Sports Premium Plan ○ Challenging stereotypes ○ Engaging parents in learning partnership ○ CDA Audit and teaching RE ○ EYFS provision and outdoor learning environments ○ LAB members visits to school <p>SEN/Safeguarding/Pupil Wellbeing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ End of year data for Disadvantaged pupils, Looked After and Post Looked After and SEND pupils ○ Intervention provision ○ Provision for EHCP pupils ○ SENCO Annual Report ○ Safer Recruitment and Single Central Record ○ Keeping Children Safe in Education ○ Attendance ○ Child Protection Plans ○ Online Safeguarding Monitoring arrangements ○ Designated LAC and Safeguarding Leads ○ NHS and pupils mental health ○ RSE Curriculum ○ Policy reviews <p>It is noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CMS LAB meetings have not yet taken place • The CEO is currently reviewing the MAT structure, including the LABs <p>Resolved: i) that SV and JP be thanked for their reports ii) that the CMS Reports are to be circulated following the meetings</p>
<p>10</p>	<p>Safeguarding Update SCR Concerns:</p>

	<p>It is noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An external review of the SCRs took place on 26th November 2021 – no major concerns identified • The SCRs need to be held centrally with 3 tabs for each of the schools • A Link Director with safeguarding knowledge is to be considered <p>CMAT/LABs Safeguarding Processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The expectations and communications need to be clarified <p>Level 1 Safeguarding training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All CMAT schools offer Level 1 training and share any overdue or new staff training <p>Resolved: i) that the updates be received with thanks ii) that the SCR Audit Report is to be circulated, once received</p>
11	<p>Christian Distinctiveness – St Nicholas</p> <p>Resolved: that JP is to circulate the Report</p>
12	<p>Growth strategy Plan Update</p> <p>It is noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The MAT now have a full time CEO (PB) • A Head of School has been appointed to CMS • The CEO is reviewing the structure, growth and issues of the MAT – see agenda number 13 • There is more work to be done on centralisation • RW will provide the marketing perspective once appointed • Strategy beyond 2021/2022 is to be reviewed in the new year 2022 <p>Directors Challenge:</p> <p>Why has the CEO full time role only been confirmed at 18 months? Should the Board consider if this is long enough?</p> <p>A. It is an appropriate amount of time but can be extended or shortened as required. It will also give the new Head of School time to impact at CMS and give the time and opportunity to change things. The new Head of School is doing a great job and CMS is moving forward positively.</p> <p>Does the growth strategy and centralised services go hand in hand as a positive attraction to schools joining the MAT?</p> <p>A. The benefit of growth is initially economies of scale. CMAT needs to establish robust procedures before it is in a position to invite other schools to join the MAT. Due diligence would take place on both sides and CMAT is not in the right position for this.</p> <p>Resolved: i) that the CEO be thanked for his reports and updates ii) that the CEO and Chair will continue to discuss the future structure of CMAT</p>
13	<p>CEO Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential Growth: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CMAT has been having positive discussions with a similar sized MAT about a potential merger ○ Ethos and values would be complementary ○ The RSC is supportive and encouraged CMAT to submit a formal application ○ A further meeting with Directors has been arranged for 19th January 2022 • Structure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Refer to the strategic leadership model circulated ○ Directors will need to be committed to the further centralisation of policies and practices ○ Scheme of delegation to be reviewed to ensure there is complete clarity of roles and expectations for all

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Refer to “Building Strong Academy Trusts” and “MAT Assurance Framework” outlining the current expectations for all MATs ● Local School issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Focus for support remains with BFS, as colleagues are working hard to implement new policies and procedures for the imminent Ofsted inspection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is drive and commitment from the school ▪ If BFS do not receive a ‘good; Ofsted outcome it will impact on the planned growth of CMAT ▪ School Improvement Partner and bespoke support for teachers provided by SNFS ○ A strength of CMAT is the ability to provide appropriate, bespoke support where required using the expertise which exists across the 3 schools ● Vulnerable Pupils: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No significant issues of concern for the vulnerable pupils in CMAT’s care ● Business Hub: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CMAT has identified the need to appoint a Chief Finance Officer to lead this aspect of provision ○ The CEO wishes to thank all Directors and colleagues who have devoted (and continue to devote) a huge amount of time and expertise during these very exciting, but highly challenging times <p>The CEO referred Directors to the other documents circulated with his report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Building Strong Academy Trusts ● CMAT Strategic Leadership Model – January 2022 ● MAT Assurance Framework – being utilised as an audit tool <p>Resolved: i) that the CEO be thanked for his report and updates. ii) that there are no objections from the Board for the CEO to continue discussions with the similar sized MAT.</p>
	<p>Policy Approval</p> <p>See agenda number 8.</p>
AOB	<p>It is with regret that the CEO has to inform Directors of an incident that took place in Codsall with a young 17-year-old girl being found dead. The young girl had lived in Bilbrook and had been a valued volunteer at SNFS. The police are investigating and have visited SNFS to speak to JP, who is understandably very upset.</p>
14	<p>Date and time of next meetings:</p> <p>Finance 13th December 2021 – RW to be invited to attend Board 29th March 2022 at 4.30pm Board 14th June 2022 at 4.30pm</p> <p>LAB meetings are to take place at least two weeks prior to the Board meetings.</p> <p>The Chair concluded by saying that the past year had been challenging with a huge commitment from the schools and the Directors. The Chair expressed his thanks to the time given and will write to all schools to thank them for all the work that has and continue to be done.</p> <p>DN added that he is to appear in Priscilla, Queen of the Desert from 26th to 30th April 2022 at the Mill Theatre, Dormston and all Directors are invited to come along. It was agreed that CMAT will arrange a night out for Directors on 29th April 2022!!</p>

The meeting closed at 6.55pm

Chair

Date

Item No	Action	By Whom	By When
2	The Chair is to follow up the approval of RW as a Director with MJ and CECET	TF	17 Dec 2021
2	The CEO is to confirm the appointment of Tony Wynn-Jones as a Member	PB	17 Dec 2021
2	Directors are asked to continue to reach out for new Directors / Members	All	Ongoing
4	Companies House and the ESFA are to be notified on the new Directors. It is noted that JB needs to be added.	OD	17 Dec 2021
4	LH is to develop a one page outline for CMAT/LAB safeguarding processes. This item will be taken forward by the Heads and LABs	Heads/LABs	29 Mar 2022
4	A Clerk is to be appointed to the LABs and the Board.	All	29 Mar 2022
4	Chair to write to all staff, on behalf of the Board, to thank them for all their hard work over the past year.	TF	17 Dec 2021
5	VB will check TAMS for any filters that can identify quickly any non-compliant items by school.	VB	06 Dec 2021
5	VB will circulate a statement of compliance to Directors by 6 th December 2021.	VB	06 Dec 2021
10	The SCR Audit Report is to be circulated, once received.	PB	29 Mar 2022
11	JP is to circulate the Christian Distinctiveness Report.	JP	17 Dec 2021
12	CEO and Chair will continue to discuss the future structure of CMAT.	TF/PB	29 Mar 2022