



**MINUTES OF AN ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
DISCOVERY SCHOOLS ACADEMIES TRUST LTD ("COMPANY")
held at Danemill Primary School, Mill Lane, Enderby, LE19 4LH
on 28 January 2020
at 5pm**

Members present:

David Williams (Chair), Carolyn Lewis, Rob Woolston

Trustees present:

Maggie Spence, Shane Bray, Richard Bettsworth, Ed Green, Gary Sims, Paul Stone, Mihir Trivedi, Jonathan Parsons

Also in attendance:

Emma Clarke - Finance Director (FD), David Briggs – Director of Primary Education, Helen Stockill- Head of Governance, Simon Whitaker - Governor – KLMS Federation, Chris Bruce - Executive Head KLMS Federation

Item
<p>1. Welcome and apologies</p> <p>The Chair, David Williams, opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees. Members, Trustees, staff and visitors made their introductions outlining their association with the Trust and relevant professional experience.</p> <p>Simon Whitaker, Vice Chair Keyham Millgate Federation, was welcomed an observer to the meeting. Simon introduced himself and provided an overview of his background.</p> <p>Apologies of absence were received and accepted from Celia Varley – Member.</p>
<p>2. Declarations of business and pecuniary interests</p> <p>There were no declarations of interests relevant to items on the agenda.</p>
<p>3. Minutes of the previous AGM & matters arising</p> <p>The minutes of the previous AGM, 29 January 2019 were ACCEPTED as a correct record and were signed by the Chair. There were no matters arising.</p>
<p>4. Not used</p>
<p>5. Presentation of the Annual Accounts 2018/19</p> <p>Emma Clarke, FD, presented Members with an overview of the annual accounts for the 2018/19 financial year. Following detailed scrutiny by the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, the accounts were approved by the Board of Trustees in December and sent to the EFSA and Companies House before the deadline, 31st</p>

December 2019. Emma reported the accounts had been published on the Trust website and emailed to Members in line with statutory requirements.

Emma explained that an unqualified opinion had been given by the Auditors, MHA McIntyre Hudson, and along with the accounts the Auditors had submitted a Management Letter. There were no issues raised in the Management Letter relating to regularity to be brought to the attention of Members.

Emma reported, for 2018/19:

- A -£70k movement in revenue reserves primarily relating to remodelling costs. This was a better position than anticipated due to additional SEN and grant funding.
- A +£239k movement in capital reserves. A full capital programme was costed inline with the capital strategy.
- The resulting total reserves equated to £2.2m = £1.9m restricted + £209k unrestricted
- Based on the agreed Reserves Policy, the Trust held minimum operational reserve of 5% of GAG (£847k) with a further 5% of GAG (£847k) held in reserve for strategic investments = £1,694k total and therefore £297k above the reserve threshold
- Total trust funds were reported as:

	£,000
Revenue Reserves	£2,200
Capital Reserves	£209
Pension Fund Deficit	-£10,777
Fixed Asset Net Book Value	*£31,148
Total Funds	£22,571

**Includes £386k Capital reserves*

Emma concluded her presentation and invited questions. There were no questions raised by Members and Emma was thanked for her input.

6. Appointment of Auditors

Emma Clarke reported that the Trust was entering the third year of the maximum five year external audit contract with MHA Macintyre Hudson. Following a best value review, Emma recommended continuing the contract with MHA Macintyre Hudson for 2019/20 which Members unanimously **AGREED**.

7. Progress made by the Trust 2018/19

Paul Stone, CEO, provided an overview of key Trust successes which included significant improvement in maths attainment and progress, a whole Trust focus. Paul was pleased to report improvement in the Trust position in the MAT National rankings in maths, writing and reading which along with all schools being at least good would open up opportunities to sponsor underperforming schools.

Financial efficiency had been a key focus and significant progress had been made including developing

Headteachers financial planning skills alongside the introduction of benchmarking tools and efficiency reviews. The Trust was in a stronger long-term financial position. The re-deployment policy had been effective at keeping talent in the Trust and minimising redundancy costs, this was a real benefit of a MAT structure.

Paul highlighted the School Management Resource Advisor visit which had been positive, and the report demonstrated that the Trust was making best use of its available resources to provide the best possible education for pupils. The Trust had been informed that Lord Agnew would be visiting in the coming weeks.

David Briggs, Director of Primary, shared with Members and Trustees the key education focussed successes including all school being at least GOOD, the development of the curriculum strategy and the continuation of the teaching and learning strategy, all of which were contributing factors in the success of schools. David share the school improvement activities in place to support the development of schools. David highlighted the summer scheme which had attracted positive publicity and recognition.

Finally, James Brown – Deputy Trust Leader, shared a series of short films that exemplified the Trust values and the impact they had on children and staff.

8. Looking ahead – plans for the year ahead

Paul Stone, shared key development priorities and associated risks for the year ahead.

An overview of the development of the SEND cluster was presented by Chris Bruce, Executive Head Keyham Millgate Federation. Chris gave a brief background to the cluster, the partner schools and the consultation timeline. The Keyham and Millgate consultation had concluded and the project was moving forward with a steering group in place.

Paul linked the SEND development to wider benefits across the trust. The development was a platform for growth to benefit more pupils across the City and County. In referencing the capacity risk, Paul confirmed that a HR Manager and administration support had been recruited.

The financial position for schools remained fragile and whilst reserves were strong, the trust needed to continue to drive efficiencies.

Paul reported that the lack of SEND support in the system was resulting in behaviour challenges in school. The Trust was responsive to SEND demand locally with the development of SEMH unit at Captains provided as an example. The SEND cluster would add further expertise to the primary cluster alongside the development of existing specialist support into a Therapy Service.

Finally, Paul spoke about the work that was underway to support improvements in reading.

9. Q&A

David Williams opened the floor to questions.

Carolyn Lewis, Member, asked what the Trust was doing to improve diversity and difference in leadership and governance.

James Brown spoke about the leadership programmes on offer through the teaching school aimed at women and black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) teachers aspiring to move into leadership.

In terms of Board diversity, Trustees recognised the challenge and had taken steps to achieve greater diversity. Trustees agreed that different backgrounds, perspectives and experiences added considerable value to board discussions and strategic decisions. The SEND cluster development would provide an opportunity to remodel the Board to help achieve greater diversity.

Members asked how the Trust was addressing unconscious bias in the language and advertising of opportunities. Paul said the Trust was aware of this and shared some recent work on re-writing job descriptions.

10. Closing remarks

David thanked those present for attending and for their continued support of the Trust. There being no further business the meeting closed at 5.57pm



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Chair

3 February 2021

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Date

The AGM was attended by:

Nikki Matthew
Tracey Lawrence

Headteacher
Headteacher