Company No.: 08036395

MINUTES

Non-Confidential minutes of the Eden Academy Board of Trustees, held via Teams on Tuesday 28th January 2025, starting at 6:30pm

Attendance:

Angela St. John	ASJ	Trustee
Anne Marie Neatham	AMN	Trustee
Barry Nolan[1]	BN	Trustee (Chair)
Jane Inglese	JI	Trustee
John Moffat	JM	Trustee
Leena Dattani	LD	Trustee
Mari Ladu	ML	Trustee
Mary Canavan	MC	Trustee
Mike Holt	MH	Trustee
Vicky Collis[2]	VC	Trustee (Deputy Chair)
Also present		
Andrew Sanders[3]	AS	Regional Director
Keith Holroyd	KJH	Head of Governance, Policy & Compliance; Clerk
Susan Douglas	SD	CEO & Accounting Officer

Apologies:

Emily Ellington	EE	Trustee
David Edwards	DE	Trustee designate

The meeting was declared quorate.

[1] From item 36
[2] Chaired the meeting to item 36
[3] To item 35

Ref.	Discussions and decisions	Action
32/2024-25	**Welcome, introductions and apologies and the Board's acceptance or rejection for any absences** VC welcomed MH to his first meeting as a Trustee. BN welcomed AS to the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from EE and from DE. Trustees noted that BN would be listening in to the meeting initially and joining the meeting shortly, and that VC would chair the meeting until then.	
33/2024-25	**Declaration of interests and offer/receipt of gifts or hospitality** There were no new declarations.	
34/2024-25	**Demonstration of Arbor** AS briefed Trustees on the background and purpose of Arbor and provided a demonstration of some of the features which would assist Trustees in investigating issues identified in the SMI reports. Trustees discussed how often data are updated, noting that it is live data with, for example, pupil attendance updated every time the register is taken (twice-daily) and staff attendance daily, with others, e.g. pupil medical information updated as necessary. Trustees found it helpful that definitions, e.g. for persistent absence, appear on drop downs. Trustees discussed the use of the data and how, for example, it informs RD discussions with Heads, enables us to learn from and share good practice, e.g. application of absence measures, and identify trends over time. Trustees also discussed sharing data across schools, and even potentially with other Trusts. It was noted that comparator sheets are shared with all our schools, that the system enables comparisons with special schools who use Arbor and with DfE data. Trustees thanked AS for a very helpful demonstration.	
35/2024-25	**Portfolio update - Safeguarding** ML and AS took questions on the previously tabled report updating Trustees on the work of the Safeguarding Strategy Group and DSL Hub. Trustees discussed safer recruitment, particularly whether the Trust has had any historical issues and were reassured that colleagues are very proactive in seeking advice from the safeguarding team and the Safeguarding Hub. Trustees also noted that the Safeguarding Officer is very diligent in reviewing information from schools when joining the Trust. Trustees also discussed the migration to CPOMS and noted that there is work ongoing to moving historical data. AS explained the background to some of the issues and the	

Ref.	Discussions and decisions	Action
	support from CPOMS and that historic data is still available and secure in other formats. *AS left the meeting* Trustees noted that work is ongoing in relation to the safeguarding in relation to the digital strategy being developed for the Trust.	
36/2024-25	**CEO report** *Confidential minutes also refer.* SD provided some additional background and took questions from Trustees on her previously circulated report. ***Growth*** Trustees noted that there are continuing problems with the completion of the Grand Union Village School site where the standard of construction work is lacking in many areas. SD continues to chase the DfE who are the client for the build. SD shared the latest video and photo showing progress of the construction of Pinn River School site. Trustees noted the progress, how the new school fits into the site and the positive performance of the construction company, who are different to the Grand Union Village build. Trustees discussed the lack of progress from the DfE in relation to the free school proposals in Hillingdon, Harrow and Penrith. JM updated Trustees on the work he is doing with LAB Chairs in the north, to enlist the support of local MPs. ***Delivery of the strategy*** Trustees discussed the latest update on the operational delivery of the strategy including the work being done by the Deputy CEO on school improvement. SD informed Trustees that she would be bringing a paper on post-19 provision to the next Board meeting. Baseline work is continuing on staff recruitment and retention and the makeup of our workforce. MC confirmed she attends the R&R working group which is pulling together and documenting all strands of our offer. Work is also continuing on developing professional pathways for all staff and presentation to the next Board meeting is planned. **Action**: Invite Alistair Crawford to present progress on the workforce development strategy at the March meeting. *BN joined the meeting* Trustees noted that the audit of external contacts, projects and representation had shown a much wider scope of influence at local level than previously understood. Trustees were encouraged by the level of progress made already and noted the monitoring arrangements in place.	**SD & KJH**

Ref.	Discussions and decisions	Action
37/2024-25	**Board approval of the minutes of the previous meetings, actions and matters arising** The minutes of the meetings held on 26th November and 16th December 2024 were **approved**. All actions are complete.	
38/2024-25	**Portfolio update – Standards** VC briefed Trustees on her discussions with Carley Holliman (CH), Andrew Sanders (AS) and Kris Williams (KW) in the context of the reports previously circulated. ***SMI*** VC explained that the discussion with CH, AS and KW had focussed on the key issues highlighted in the summary report. Work is planned on the application of our policy in relation to dependents leave and continuing on understanding staff absence more widely. Trustees noted that most SLTs have persistent absence as a key agenda item for their weekly meetings, supported by the real time data from Arbor and recognising the good practice taking place in some of our schools. Trustees noted that a new way of recording accidents and incidents which will provide better data and information with a view to identifying ways of preventing accidents. ***Evidence of excellence*** Trustees noted that the report submitted was the first under the new framework and feedback on the format and content would be welcomed by CH. VC explained how the RAG rating works, particularly as the year progresses towards completion of SDP targets and how individual school development fits within the overarching Trust aims and strategy. Trustees noted that schools will go through repeated cycles of improvement through this framework, and that Trustees will therefore expect to see ambers and yellows as well as greens as a matter of course Trustees noted that the community element had the strongest overall assessment, and discussed the areas considered in the assessment. BN informed Trustees that the Head had given the Alexandra LAB a presentation on the framework model at its last meeting, which had been very well received. Trustees discussed how the Board will know in 3-5 years' time, that the model has been successful, noting the role of the SDP/SEF and recognition of the development cycle of schools and that even outstanding schools can always improve. Trustees discussed the potential to share the framework as part of our *Champions for SEND* strategy aim, noting that it had already been shared with the Confederation of School Trusts.	

Ref.	Discussions and decisions	Action
	Trustees also discussed how decision making in response to budget pressures are risk assessed against the requirements of provision. SD explained the work being undertaken in-year to manage school budgets in deficit, the plans for 2025-26 budget setting and cross-Trust moderation.	
39/2024-25	**Portfolio update - Finance** AMN briefed Trustees on the discussions from the recent Finance Committee meeting including: • Most of the in-year deficits have reduced and all should be under control by the end of the year. • There are still grants owed to us by some LAs which are being pursued by the COO. • Funding has been received from LB Harrow for the expansion works at Alexandra. • The recommendations from the audit report. A redraft of the pension schemes discretionary policy was discussed in detail by the committee and some additional work is taking place on this to ensure the Trust is not put at risk.	
40/2024-25	**Portfolio update – Family engagement** JI took Trustees through the key discussion points from her previously circulated report. Trustees were pleased that the report demonstrated some very positive and innovative practice across the schools. Trustees discussed the links between family engagement and persistent absence and noted the work family services teams do in relation to understanding parental need. Trustees considered how data from individual schools can be aggregated and reported and noted that there are plans for a working group to consider this. Trustees discussed there would be less Easter Club provision this year due to the reduction in LA and charity grants. Trustees also discussed the costs of recruiting an additional family services staff member centrally in terms of the value added, whilst noting the current financial position. Trustees discussed the Eden Families charity and how this is working to raise funds for centrally supported projects.	
41/2024-25	**Portfolio update – Marketing and communications** JM took Trustees through the key discussion points from his previously circulated report, including: • How to keep comms personal as the Trust grows, • The use and monitoring of social media, and • project plans for bringing schools into the Trust	

Ref.	Discussions and decisions	Action
	Trustees discussed the capacity within the Marcomms team as well as the presence of the Trust and the schools on social media and the sites currently used.	
42/2024-25	**AOB: New Lease for Growing Trees Nursery** The Trust has agreed the terms of a new lease for Growing Trees Nursery (located at the Pentland Field School site), and the COO is meeting them in early Feb to agree the rent following receipt of the valuation report. Board approval is required for the new lease for the lease and for the DfE application, as DfE permission is needed for the lease. The report hadn't been available in time for this meeting and it was **agreed** that BN could action the request for Board approval for the new Growing Trees Nursery lease under Chair's Action, taking advice from AMN and ASJ as the finance and asset management portfolio holders. **Action**: Circulate the report to BN, AMN and ASJ for consideration and comment. **Action**: Decide whether to approve the lease under Chair's Action.	**KJH** **BN**
43/2024-25	**AOB: Governance conference** Trustees were advised that cabinet were discussing plans for this year's governance conference on Friday (31st) and were asked to email any additional thoughts regarding content to KJH. **Action**: Email any additional thoughts regarding content for the Governance Conference to KJH by Thursday evening (30th)	**All Trustees**

Ref.	Ratification items	Action
R14/2024-25	**Governance charter and scheme of delegation** Trustees noted and **ratified** the updated documents	
R15/2024-25	**Staff code of conduct** Trustees **ratified** the document.	

Ref.	Information items	Action
I7/2024-25	**Pay policy** Trustees **noted** the updated policy which had been ratified by the Remuneration Committee.	

There are confidential minutes for this meeting.

Meeting closed at 8:39pm

These minutes were agreed by the Board at its subsequent meeting on 25th March 2025

The Eden Academy Trust is a charitable company, limited
by guarantee, registered in England and Wales
Register number: 08036395
Registered office: Moorcroft School, Bramble Close,
Uxbridge UB8 3BF

ACTION SUMMARY

Agenda item x/2024-25		Action	Who
36	CEO report	Invite Alistair Crawford to present progress on the workforce development strategy at the March meeting	SD & KJH
42	AOB: New Lease for Growing Trees Nursery	Circulate the report to BN, AMN and ASJ for consideration and comment.	KJH
		Decide whether to approve the lease under Chair's Action.	BN
43	AOB: Governance conference	Email any additional thoughts regarding content for the Governance Conference to KJH by Thursday evening (30th)	All Trustees

DECISION SUMMARY

Agenda item x/2024-25		Decision
37	Board approval of the minutes of the previous meetings, actions and matters arising	The minutes of the meetings held on 26th November and 16th December 2024 were **approved**.
42	AOB: New Lease for Growing Trees Nursery	It was **agreed** that BN could action the request for Board approval for the new Growing Trees Nursery lease under Chair's Action, taking advice from AMN and ASJ as the finance and asset management portfolio holders
R14	Governance charter and scheme of delegation	Trustees noted and **ratified** the updated documents.
R15	Staff code of conduct	Trustees **ratified** the document
I7	Pay policy	Trustees **noted** the updated policy which had been ratified by the Remuneration Committee