## Minutes of Meeting

**Present:** Richard Marlow, Dick Vasey, Kevin Hearn, Angela Lindley, Richard Cronin, Louise Patterson, Jane Haywood, Chris Hiney-Saunders, Andrew Jones  
**Date:** 8 March 2017  
**Time:** 6.00 pm

### Discussion

<table>
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<th>Academy Consultation Meeting</th>
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<td>- JH introduced herself and asked that the representatives from the school and the The Two Counties Trust do the same.</td>
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<td>- JH introduced RM Headteacher who presented a number of slides (attached) discussing what an academy is and why HHS would want to become an academy. The preparations that have already taken place to date and why The Two Counties Trust were identified. He also discussed things that will remain the same and things that may change from academy status.</td>
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<td>- DV then gave a brief overview of their journey from being an academy to becoming a MAT in April 2016; he discussed the collaboration of the schools involved and the need to get things right for the benefit of all of the students involved.</td>
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<td>- DV discussed the process for HHS to join the MAT and the accountability for the trustees of the MAT. He was asked to present any risks involved and there were not many identified through the due diligence. DV discussed the fact that HHS was identified as having a strong leadership team and a strong and effective governing body. Where issues had been identified with some faculties some support was already being offered by the MAT.</td>
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<td>- DV discussed the need for the MAT to remain made up of local schools and discussed his 30 minute rule (if a school could not be reached within this time then it makes it hard to share good practice amongst the staff).</td>
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<td>- DV discussed the shared ethos that the children should be at the heart of the school.</td>
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<td>- JH asked how long it would be before the effect of joining the MAT had on the school and improvements started to be seen.</td>
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<td>- DV replied giving details of The Manor School where the issues were leadership based (inexperienced) and in a particular subject area. Since joining the MAT their outcomes have improved with support and were much improved last summer.</td>
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<td>- At HHS Maths is the area of concern based on the outcomes from last year, and The Two Counties Trust have already started working with the maths staff and DV believes that there are some good maths teachers at HHS.</td>
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<td>- DV reiterated that the due diligence carried out did not highlight significant weaknesses and HHS has already started working with Ashfield School in some areas.</td>
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<td>- RM pointed out that this would be taking the work that the school had already started to the next level; he discussed staffing changes and strong practitioners in a number of areas and the setting up of support to assist with making improvements.</td>
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<td>- RM discussed the impact that the changes were already having on KS3 students, but that it was Year 11 outcomes that the school is judged by; these are not due to the MAT.</td>
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<td>- It was also pointed out that as Ashfield School is a teaching school this gives access to good staff who are newly qualified.</td>
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<td>- One parent pointed out that Clowne deserves a good school; RM agreed.</td>
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<td>- RM discussed the work that HHS was already undertaking with the feeder schools (Y5 at present) to make the links with these to encourage more students to see HHS as their preferred school. Time had been allocated to teaching staff to undertake this and this will be increased in future years.</td>
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<td>- Questions were then taken from the parents in attendance.</td>
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Q. What evidence is there that Academies are any better than LA schools?

- RM responded saying that small trusts have been seen to be more effective than larger trusts who are not having the impact due to the way that they have been set up (imposing a central model). The partnership with The Two Counties Trust will be focussed in the classroom.
- AJ responded by stating that 70% of Secondary Schools are academies and most are improving. The schools left in the maintained sector are dwindling and the support LA are able to give is reducing.
- JH stated that the governors have all got their own personal views on academy status, but have tried to find a model that suits the school and wanted the ability to shape this; this is why the decision to explore a partnership with The Two Counties Trust was taken. Governors are confident that they have made the right choice and one that is best for our students, fitting in with the current ethos of our school.
- DV added that all schools are listed to view results and those with a similar context and similar intakes have the similar issues (currently white working class boys).
- DV pointed out that other MAT’s have made mistakes by growing too quickly. He said that the DFE needed to make sure that this is right, which is why it is important to work locally and in small contexts.
- AJ added that he wanted the school to be different and he wanted there to be challenge on the leadership, otherwise what was the point.
- JH concluded the point that HHS is not a bad school and is not failing, it just needs to get better.

Q. Whilst we understand the position of the school currently, 2020 is not far and there are numerous options open to the school. This MAT has been trading less than 12 months and questions raised regarding the timing as it is difficult to see the progress that the MAT can have made over this time?

- DV said that this was a fair comment, however although The Two Counties Trust were young there was a distinct difference between Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire; in Nottinghamshire there are only 3 students left who are not in a MAT, whilst in Derbyshire nearly all schools are currently looking to convert with very few academies. He discussed the Ofsted judgements being made on schools which may be influenced by this.
- DV was impressed at how serious the school governors have taken the process.
- He informed the group that the MAT had already turned down 2 secondary schools that they felt did not fit their criteria and ethos and are strong enough to say no to the DFE.
- AJ discussed the fact that the Ashfield School was a teaching school was significant, and that this would bring capacity which is a good feature for a MAT. He also discussed that the advantages in going into the MAT early in the journey would enable the school to influence decisions.

Q. How many trusts did the school look at as a potential trust for the school to join?

- RM advised that initially all of East Midlands, Humber and Yorkshire, some of which were discounted due to them belonging to large academy chains. There were some single academy trusts which were also discounted as it was felt that these would not have the capacity to support the school.

There was a short list of 20 initially which was then reduced to a smaller number based on the distance from the school. The governing body had a list of 5 MAT’s and the school was asked to make contact with 4 of these. This was outside of the due diligence. Some of these were still deemed too far away to want to work with HHS and some did not respond.

Q. In regards to the TUPE arrangements would the staff all transfer, including the Headteacher?

- DV confirmed that all staff would TUPE transfer including the HT; the local governing body still would have full delegated responsibility for this role and the MAT would only intervene if there was cause for concern. He reiterated that the school had a highly effective governing body.

Q. Who would have financial responsibility for HHS once it becomes part of a MAT?

- This financial responsibility would continue to stay local, with the MAT having the overview.
- All savings would go back into the school.
- DV spoke about Ashfield Academy and that during one year they had made £200k in savings, which all goes back to teaching and learning.
Q. How big do you envisage the MAT getting?

- DV responded that he would see it being between 8 and 10 schools, but he doesn’t know for certain. At the present time the trustees are only looking at secondary schools as they have the confidence that they can help and support these.
- DV reiterated an earlier comment that any school that was taken into the MAT would have to fall into the local criteria (within 30 minutes travel) in order to be able to provide support and be robust and strong. If the schools don’t fit this then the MAT and trustees would not be interested in them joining.
- KH informed the group that the growth needed to be controlled in order to ensure that the ‘back office systems’ were available to support.
- DV informed that part of the growth strategy was to include more ‘good’ schools joining the MAT in order to build on the capacity to ensure that every school was at least good.

Q. One of the weaknesses of the school is not having a 6th form – is this something that may change in the future?

- RM advised that on the current site this was not viable as the school had been designated a 11 – 16 school and the design of the build did not lend itself to providing this.
- RM spoke about the collaboration with ‘Aspire’ with other local schools who also did not have a 6th form, but that this did not work effectively and was not viable.
- Parents discussed the fact that public transport to get to any post 16 provision was a problem due to the length of time to travel.
- There is the possibility of 6th form provision being provided as part of the trust through the other schools (currently 650 students in Ashfield School 6th form which includes vocational courses) where buses could be provided, however this is currently not a priority.
- DV informed the group that 6th form funding has been slashed and any school needs at least between 250 to 300 pupils in order to make this financially viable.
- JH advised that through working in partnership with the MAT there is a potential solution to post 16 study, however transport is the key element.

Q. A question was raised relating to the records of the MAT when on 1 April 2016 12 trustees resigned and could someone explain why?

- DV advised that Ashfield School was already an Academy prior to the MAT forming and therefore the trustees of the academy needed to resign in order to become trustees of the MAT, therefore this due to the process of forming the MAT.

Q. A question was raised in relation to the remuneration and expenses of trustees that were disproportionate to other schools, with a high level of fixed staff costs that were disproportional of supply costs (compared to other trusts) with excessive supply costs of £1.4m?

- DV and KH disputed this amount as supply costs were £60k for the year and were in line with the budget set.
- DV advised that there were currently 12 staff on maternity leave at Ashfield School to account for supply costs.
- KH and DV to look into these figures as they did not appear to be correct.

(POST MEETING NOTE – there was an error on the accounts for the year which have been reported to the accountants. The figure of £1.4m is not correct).

- JH asked whether there were any further questions, and a question was posed as to whether this was a deal already arranged.
- JH informed that all governors were behind the move to join The Two Counties Trust and that the school needed to be in charge of its own destiny. As the power point alluded to we are in a position with the RSC that our details could be circulated to all trusts and we could be ‘picked off’. This was something that the governors or the school did not want