

**Present:** Anthony Abrahams (AA) Paul Clarkson (PC) (Chair) Lesley Glover (LG), Pat Jones (PJ), Mark Kiteley (MK), Jasmin Masih (JM), Christine O'Reilly (CO'R), Ian Pryce (IP), Kay Rodger (KR)

**In attendance:** Anne Day (Trust Accountant) Mary Langley (Head-teacher Wixams Tree Primary), Claire Nash (Business Manager BCAT) Rachel Nicol (Company Secretary), Paul Spyropoulos (PS) Principal, Wixams Academy,

**Company Secretary**

Rachel Nicol

No	Item
BCAT/1/21	<b>Apologies</b> None received.
BCAT/2/21	<b>Declaration of interest</b> Ian Pryce, Dave Roffey, Kay Rodger, Pat Jones and Rachel Nicol are employed by Bedford College.  Mark Kiteley is a non-executive director and Chair at BCS Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of Bedford College. No declarations were made.
BCAT/3/21	<b>Minutes</b> The minutes of the meeting of 1 October were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting subject to.
BCAT/4/21	<b>Matters Arising from Previous Minutes</b>  Paul Clarkson was welcomed to his first meeting of the Trust and endorsed as a director.  Paul introduced himself and provided details of his background.
BCAT/5/21  1	<b>Principal's report – Wixams Academy</b>  <b>1. Pupil progress</b>  Jacqui Hepburn (JH) attended to update the board on pupil progress highlighting:  1.1 Position at the end of December, <b>year 7</b> students are now considered to be back on track, equating to where previous cohorts had been at the

same time of year. The intervention with year 7 was prompt and although it is early days the Board considered progress to be positive.

**1.2 Year 10** most recent data post lockdown as there was no summer data. Autumn and spring data is based on teacher assessment and in class test data but is not considered to equate to rigorous testing following summer term revision.

**1.3 Reading and numeracy.** The impact of lockdown on reading levels and the national picture. Year 9 have had an additional term in KS3 due to lock down. A large programme of intervention is in place to tackle the issues including 100 pupils receiving additional online support. Numeracy has not been impacted to the same extent but an external provider is supporting year 7 activity.

**1.4 Progress** is expected at half to three quarters of a grade each year. Mid year trends and work with heads of faculty on accurate assessment and data analysis were outlined. The Board discussed the progression levels and why there is a jump in targets. It was explained that year 9 are still being measured against KS3 targets. Assurance was given that there is time to achieve close to the year-end target position given the intervention in place. Current grades were confirmed as “working at” grades with no account taken of impact of lock down. There has been issues with technology and therefore not all information is available. The Board noted that the current position is the first time it has been estimated that national levels are not being achieved although the current national position is not known. Heads of Faculty are working on a recovery curriculum

**1.5 Gaps in high grades achievement** was discussed and it was understood that there is some reluctance to award high grades at this stage given the time spent with students and the content covered. The school is working on a holistic grading and rigorous approach.

**1.6 Progress of SEN students,** the board asked how these are split across the years. The appendix showing the breakdown was highlighted. KS3 attainment is strong against FFT targets that are tracked backwards. The gap has widened in KS4 as a result of lock down where there is a bigger impact. 70 students are currently attending, including some vulnerable learners. Pastoral support is strong.

**1.7 Use of external providers** to support intervention and cost impact was raised. It was confirmed that catch up premium has been used to fund a tutor scheme and provide additional support for vulnerable pupils. The school has used the providers before and quality assures the provision by observing some lessons and meeting tutors. The school provides the materials and has trained providers in using the materials.

JH was thanked and left the meeting

## 2. Staffing and recruitment

Most vacancies have now been filled although [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] A staff costing proposal had been submitted and the Trust Accountant confirmed that the indicative budget was approved in December.

**It was confirmed recruitment should proceed within the agreed budget**

### **3. Covid and attendance**

70 pupils are currently attending. The internal limit has been increased but assurance given that the position is manageable.

### **4. Capital Programme**

Work has taken place with the Trust Accountant to develop the programme.

#### **4.1 Lap tops**

The Principal confirmed that lap tops were not provided for the current year 7 as they had been for previous years. Although the Board had previously confirmed lap tops should be provided the Academy had not budgeted for them in the current year and had planned for parents to enter into a laptop scheme but this has not been successful.

The Board discussed the depreciation period and it was confirmed that where the school provides laptops they are expected to be returned after 4 years. A budget is in place for repairs and replacement.

The Principal proposed that laptops are now purchased for year 7 and the Board discussed how this should be funded. WA forecast income and expenditure was discussed including the projected over spend on pay and underspend on non-pay.

**The Board concluded that as a one off event 50% of the cost of lap tops for year 7 (total cost £48,000) would be met from reserves with WA meeting the balance. Assurance was provided that all costs of provision would be met by WA in future years and that lap tops will be provided as a teaching aid.**

**Board authority to relax procurement regulations on purchase of the lap tops for expediency was confirmed but support will be obtained from the College to ensure value for money is achieved.**

### **5. Strategic developments**

#### **5.1 Sixth form**

The potential for a sixth form had been discussed at the Board Strategy day and clarification of next steps to assess viability was sought. The Principal had met a builder and was exploring the potential for using the top floor (originally intended as sixth form space) The space is currently being used for special needs provision.

It was reiterated that the Trust agreed the vision is for a sixth form subject to it being viable. The financial modelling will be done with the Trust Accountant with support from the College. There is also potential for the

	<p>College to assist with the specification for the wider research on student numbers, demographics, curriculum and required accommodation. The cost of the research was considered to be an operational expense. The potential for a bridging option using the top floor until further building work can take place was outlined. The Board expressed caution that if a proposal narrows the curriculum offered it will constrict numbers and impact. The Principal will explore this further with PC and ensure it is also covered in the research.</p> <p><b><i>The Principal will lead the scope for research to be commissioned and outline the costs, timeline and scope at the next meeting (PS)</i></b></p>
BCAT/6/21	<p><b>Head-teacher's report Wixams Tree Primary</b></p> <p>The report of the Local Advisory Body and LAB and the Headteacher's report were noted.</p> <p><b>1.1 Pupil Numbers.</b> Numbers in school are increasing daily due to some pupils not being able to engage at home.</p> <p><b>1.2 Pupil progress.</b> Reception pupils are making positive progress. Year 2 and year 6 pupils are understood to be making positive progress but cannot be formally assessed until they return to school. Intervention sessions are taking place with the provision of online sessions. Parents of SEN children are communicated with on a regular basis and targets regularly updated.</p> <p><b>1.3 IT equipment</b> was discussed. ML confirmed that the school has devices provided under a number of schemes and does not consider there is a need for additional lap tops for home learning.</p> <p>The Board was pleased to note the curriculum and thematic schemes has supported the performance of boys during lock down.</p> <p><b>2. Staffing:</b> Morale is low and some staff have experienced personal bereavements. The Board was also extremely sorry to hear that [REDACTED] and passed on their support.</p> <p><b>3. Strategic developments</b></p> <p><b>4. Budgets.</b> The Head-teacher has reviewed the budget in respect of the additional classes agreed at the Strategy day. The budgets at the current time are not balancing. The indicative budget is based on pupil numbers of 390 which differs to the figures presented previously. The Board discussed whether the non-pay costs can be reduced to pay for staffing. Such a reallocation together with use of part of the forecast surplus in the current year will be considered but the potential for growth funding will also be explored with the Council.</p> <p><b>The Board had agreed the additional classes in principle at the Strategy day.</b></p> <p>Assurance was given that the budget can be balanced to the bottom line. The financial risk was articulated: if the 390 predicted numbers are not</p>

	<p>achieved there is potential for a clawback. There will also be pressure on future years as salaries increase but income per pupil does not. The Head-teacher accepts the risk and estimated pay costs will increase to 78% (target 75%). It was reiterated that pupil numbers will be taken at the October census point.</p> <p><b>The consensus of the Board is to support the additional classes and accept up to 78% pay for one year only.</b></p> <p><b>The report was noted</b></p>
<b>BCAT/7/21</b>	<p><b>Policies</b></p> <p>The Business Manager had circulated a revised SEND Policy. It was confirmed that each school have their own policies and that the one presented is for WA.</p> <p>Previous concerns of a board member on format, length of policies and naming individuals were reiterated but assurance given that the policy follows a local authority template and the SENDCO has advised on the required content.</p> <p><b>The Policy was approved for WA but the Business Manager will confirm whether the policy is a Trust level policy.(CN)</b></p>
<b>BCAT/8/21</b>	<p><b>Wixams Academy budget monitoring 2020-2021</b></p> <p>The Business Manager presented the report and highlighted staff costs forecast 73k over budget at year end with contributing factors being staff absences, supply costs due to staff sickness and appointment of an additional learning support assistant for additional SEND pupils.</p> <p>Non-pay costs are currently forecast under budget due to costs saved as a result of lock down but the position is difficult to predict given the uncertainties around re-opening.</p> <p>The Board sought to understand the potential and risks around virement between non-pay and pay costs. It was confirmed that control of pay costs is important because of the need to ensure future affordability.</p> <p><b>The report was noted</b></p>
<b>BCAT/9/21</b>	<p><b>Wixams Tree Primary budget monitoring 2020-2021</b></p> <p>Pupil numbers were reported to stand at 301, 1 over budget. Forecast pay and non-pay costs are on budget with some of projected surplus being used to furnish the library and classrooms.</p> <p><b>The report was noted</b></p> <p><i>PS, ML and CN left the meeting</i></p>
<b>BCAT/10/21</b>	<p><b>Trust budget monitoring 2020-2021</b></p>

	<p>The Trust Accountant presented the report and explained that the school budget monitoring reports The schools reports presented the student numbers at 31 December but the census date is 1 October.</p> <p>Catch up and exceptional cost funding resulting from Covid has been added into the forecast. The government has said that more funds will be forthcoming in respect of Covid testing but amounts are uncertain. The programme is currently staffed by volunteers but as students return it is likely labour costs will be incurred. Additional cleaning costs are being incurred but with savings elsewhere.</p> <p>Pay rises have been finalised and incorporated in forecast.</p> <p>Additional Covid funding has been allocated directly to the schools. The rag rating around pupil numbers was highlighted. A claw back is anticipated due to the over optimistic pupil numbers. The Board discussed how pupil numbers are forecast by using roll forward numbers and questioned the level of confidence and risk of clawback. It was considered that the predictions are robust.</p> <p>The Trust budgets balance overall but with agreed KPIs such as the pay cost ratio being carefully monitored.</p> <p><b>The report was noted</b></p>
<p><b>BCAT/11/21</b></p>	<p><b>Strategy day feedback</b></p> <p>The Executive summary had been circulated to the board with copies of the presentations.</p> <p>WTP have confirmed additional form entry from 2022 and are also exploring potential involvement in the planned additional primary school for Wixams.</p> <p>The Board will receive more information on plans for the Sixth form as detailed earlier in the minutes.</p> <p>It was agreed to review the terms of reference of the Local Advisory bodies and the Chair will meet the LABs in due course.</p>
<p><b>BCAT/12/21</b></p>	<p><b>Any other business</b></p> <p>It was explained that the Board is required to establish an audit committee to manage and monitor an internal audit programme and make recommendations in respect of the external audit. Volunteers were asked to contact the Company Secretary. <b><i>Terms of reference will be brought to the next board meeting for approval (RN).</i></b></p>
<p><b>BCAT/13/21</b></p>	<p><b>Next meeting</b></p> <p>It was agreed the next meeting will take place on <b>Monday 22 March at 2pm</b></p>

