

WILDERN ACADEMY TRUST

Trust Board Annual Statement: July 2021

Vision and Values:

Wildern Academy Trust includes Wildern School an outstanding secondary school providing high quality education for 2,000 pupils currently on roll, Boorley Park primary school, which opened in 2019 and currently comprises of Year R and Year 1 cohorts and Deer Park secondary school that will open September 2021 to Year 7. The key principles and ethos of the Trust are built on Care, Opportunity and Quality.

Our commitment to serving the local community has been a key driver in developing the Trust. Wildern Academy Trust's principle aim is to provide an outstanding learning experience for each child within the community. We are ambitious for all our students and offer a clear focus on achievement for all and high-quality teaching in a stimulating environment.

Governance Arrangements:

Governance for the Trust is now as follows;

4 Members – 1 vacancy

8 Trustees – includes the Executive Headteacher, 2 Vacancies

Wildern School Local Governing Body (LGB) – 9 Governors that includes the Headteacher, 2 parent governors, 1 staff governor, 4 Trustee appointed governors and 1 vacancy (Trustee appointed)

Boorley Park LGB – 9 Governors that includes the Headteacher, 2 parent governors, 4 Trustee appointed governors and 1 staff governor and 1 Trustee appointed vacancy

Deer Park LGB - 9 Governors that includes the interim Headteacher, 1 parent governor and 2 Trustee appointed governors and 1 parent governor vacancy, 3 Trustee appointed vacancies and 1 staff governor vacancy

The Trust Board meets at least once each term. The Finance Committee and Local Governing Bodies meet once each half term. The Health and Safety and Safeguarding Monitoring Group meet termly and feed up to the Trust Board. These groups consider different aspects of the school enabling the Trust Board to adopt a strategic approach to running the school.

Members meet once in every 15 months at the Annual General Meeting, as required by the Articles of Association. Ad hoc Members' meetings are arranged at other times as required to ensure Members are fully informed and continue to have adequate oversight of the Trust.

Wildern Community Management Committee (WCMC) meet once a term. The Community Management Committee is comprised of a Wildern School Local Governor, the Executive Headteacher, the Trust's Business Manager and local council partners; it manages community use of Wildern's extensive sport, leisure and arts facilities aiming to operate at a small trading surplus.

Additional governance meetings take place if required.

A list of Members, Trustees, Local Governors and their roles is available on the Governance webpage of the MAT and each school's website.

Board's composition in terms of skills, effectiveness, leadership and impact

The Board still has vacancies across all governance teams but these are proactively being addressed based on the gaps identified in the last skills audit. The Trust Board have recently appointed a business owner and an accountant who provide key expertise that was needed.

Local Governing Body vacancies are being filled with members of the community who have approached the Trust. These applicants provide key skills that directly support the schools.

The Trust Board retain all governance responsibilities but as the LGBs become more established and experienced delegation will be reviewed.

Members continue to offer valued oversight, are regularly updated and actively engaged, attending the AGM and one other Member meeting that is held each academic year.

Further details of the Trust's work are detailed under the headings below of work undertaken and progress and future developments.

Overall, the governance is sound and all those involved provide the challenge, support and oversight needed.

Attendance Record:

Meetings have to be attended by a minimum of Members, Trustees and Local Governors to ensure that the decisions made are legally binding.

Details of attendance is available on the MAT website.

COVID-19

The pandemic and impact of the third lockdown from 5th January 2021 continued to affect all aspects of the Trust's events. Meetings held by the Trust Board LGBs, H&S Monitoring Group and WCMC returned to virtual meetings from October 2020 and have remained that way to date.

At Wildern School the Leisure Centre, D.@rt and some Wildern School Kitchen staff were furloughed during this year's lockdown. Some members of those staff, including non teaching staff supported the Lateral Flow Device (LFD) testing that took place for staff and students during the Spring term. Since the return to school in March 2021 Wildern School students and all Trust staff have been provided with LFDs to test at home twice a week. There has been the need to isolate some students at Wildern School during this time but work has continued to be provided in line with the curriculum during all lockdowns in all school's this year.

Boorley Park pupils have not required to isolate, however some staff have.

Work undertaken:

Wildern School

- Monitoring school standards takes place at the start of the academic year with a formal presentation to the Trust Board. Trustees and Wildern School Local Governors are involved in a two days of department reviews with all Heads of Department looking in detail at outcomes and action for the future. This involves an in

depth scrutiny of data with appropriate challenge and also an opportunity to celebrate successes. The change to awarding of grades has and will change the format of this review but it will still retain the scrutiny and challenge required of Trustees.

- Throughout the year curriculum and pastoral reports are presented to the Trustees and Local Governors as well as two annual visits to all departments, this is undertaken by individual Local Governors who are allocated specific departments. Virtual visits took place at Wildern School during the Spring term for Heads of Department to updated link governors on the action taken during the start of the academic year and the lockdown.
- Due to the in catchment demand, Trustees have continued to work with the Local Authority to ensure that all catchment children for each school is allocated a place. This has led to an increase in numbers at Wildern School which will be alleviated with the opening of Deer Park for Year 7 and subsequent years.
- Wildern School continues to very successfully run its own catering in house. This provision has expanded to the community at the weekends.
- Blocks around Wildern School have been renovated and redecorated to ensure the school remains an enjoyable environment for students and staff.

Boorley Park Primary School

- Staff continue to have been recruited over the year to support the requirements of the cohorts.
- COVID-19 disrupted learning during the last lockdown, provisions was made remotely and parents were supported. Since the school has returned to learning in class assessments have been made to identify gaps in learning and interventions put in place to ensure pupils are provided the learning needed to close those gaps.
- Year R intake for September 2021 will be full.

Deer Park School

- Senior Leadership Team established.
- The School will open on time in September 2021 and Year 7 intake is full.

Trustee activities

- The Trust continues to recruit high quality professionals in spite of the national challenges with teacher recruitment and impact of the pandemic. All leadership appointments involve Trustee participation.
- Trustees, in line with one of the academy's key aims, remain committed to the wider community and linked primary schools. Much of this work is monitored through the community management group. Changes have taken place nationally with Teaching Schools and the Trust are considering a strategic approach in response to this.
- Trustees continue to ensure best value and a rigorous scrutiny of the schools' financial management, which is reviewed formally at the half termly Finance Committee meetings as well as annual audit visits and internal scrutiny reviews.
- The Trustees continue to work with the Executive Headteacher and Headteachers in maintaining high quality facilities for the students/pupils.
- Appointments to the Trust Board and Local Governing Bodies has continued. This is ongoing as there are vacancies at all levels of governance as detailed on Page 1.
- Economies of scale opportunities continue to be utilised for the multi academy trust (MAT) and staff changes and appointments made using the extensive skills and expertise already available within the Trust.

Progress and Future Developments:

- The opening of Deer Park Secondary School and the necessary developments of Trust activities will be a focus for the next academic year. The Headteacher of Deer Park School will be recruited by the Spring Term of 2020/2021. The community offer for Deer Park will continue to be established.
- The Trust is preparing for its eighth intake of trainees for the SCITT (School Centred Initial Teacher Training). Regular updates are given to Trustees and Governors around progress and links to recruitment. This year's intake 41 trainees, with 28 currently accepted for 2021-2022.
- Trustees and Local Governors will continue to receive regular training on the national accountability measures as necessary.
- A comprehensive training plan established by the Trust Board to support new and existing members of all governance teams to ensure the ethos, strategy, vision and individual and collective responsibility of the MAT is understood at all levels will be reviewed and progressed over the next year, having been postponed due to COVID-19.
- COVID-19 remains a potentially disruptive influence on the operational activities within school and also on the strategic actions of the Trust Board. All developments will be progressed in line with government guidance with a focus on health and safety and safeguarding of all those involved with the Trust's schools.
- The Trust Board will actively continue to seek persons with the right skills to fill the vacancies for Members, Trust Board and Local Governing Bodies.