**Ofsted Board**

**Minutes of the Meeting**

**Tuesday 7 February 2017**

**In attendance**

John Cridland CBE

Linda Farrant

John Hughes

James Kempton, Interim Chair

Paul Snell CBE

Amanda Spielman, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector (HMCI)

Venessa Willms OBE

Matthew Coffey, Chief Operating Officer (COO)

Sean Harford, National Director, Education

Louise Grainger, Director, Finance, Planning and Commercial

Neil Greenwood, Director, Strategy and Digital

Matthew Purves, Deputy Director, Education Inspection Policy (for item 8)

Eleanor Schooling, National Director, Social Care

Paul Kett, Director General, DfE observer

Amy Finch, Private Secretary to HMCI

James Bowyer, Board Secretary

**Summary of action points**

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| Relevant paper: | Action: | Responsible: |
| COO update | Board members to be briefed on discussions regarding the scheduling of inspections. | Sean Harford |
| Board to be updated on discussions with the MoJ on recovering the cost of prison education inspection. | Matthew Coffey |
| Consider how the strategic dashboard could be amended to ensure it remains a useful tool in improving performance. | Matthew Coffey / Louise Grainger |
| Any significant regional-specific issues to be included within the next COO update. | Matthew Coffey |
| Board members to be invited to attend either Star Chamber meetings or the Inspection and Improvement Forums as part of their regional link. | Board Secretary |

1. **Welcome, apologies and declarations of interest**
   1. The Chair welcomed Board members and attendees. There were no apologies.
   2. Amanda Spielman, attending her first meeting of the Board, declared an interest as an independent member of the Council of Brunel University London. Board members confirmed no other conflicts of interest relevant to the agenda.
2. **Minutes, matters arising, action log and forward look**
   1. The Board accepted the minutes as an accurate record of the previous meeting held on 14 December 2016.
   2. On the action log, it was confirmed that HMCI and the COO would take forward the arrangements for a meeting with the Minister of State for Apprenticeships and Skills, Robert Halfon MP, and that the action (no. 27/2006) should be removed from the Board’s log.
   3. The Board noted that following a review of operational risks, it had been decided that none currently need to be escalated to the strategic risk register (action no. 54/2006).
   4. On the Board’s Forward Look, it was agreed that an update on thematic reporting and plans for the annual report should be added to the agenda for the meeting in July.
   5. The Chair referred to a recent Freedom of Information request that resulted in the release of a number of Board papers from the last two meetings. Board members’ attention was drawn to the protective marking on each of the papers, as well as the references on the agenda and minutes indicating that they would be proactively published.
3. **HMCI Update**
   1. The Board noted the update from HMCI.
   2. Amanda Spielman thanked all those officials who had been involved in her comprehensive induction programme and commented on the positive response she had received from across the organisation since taking up post.
   3. The Board discussed planned activity over the next 12 months and noted the high priority HMCI was giving to both internal as well as external engagement. The Board also noted HMCI’s focus on increasing the evidence base used to inform future policy direction.
4. **COO Update**
   1. The Board noted the update from the COO. A correction to the strategic dashboard regarding the senior civil servants diversity measure was also noted.
   2. The decision to end the role of Early Years HMI and introduce an Early Years Senior HMI role was discussed. It was confirmed that all staff affected had been informed of the decision and that alternative posts were being made available for those who wanted to apply. Matthew Coffey praised the way the consultation, led by Mike Sheridan, had been managed and communicated.
   3. Matthew Coffey updated the Board on the latest figures for inspection volumes and referred to the ongoing concerted effort to meet the volumes targeted in the 2016/17 corporate plan. It was also explained that discussions were ongoing about the efficiency of the inspection scheduling system, particularly in relation to short inpsections that convert to a full section 5 inspection. Sean Harford agreed to arrange a time to discuss with interested Board members current thinking on this issue.

**Action Point: Board members to be briefed on discussions regarding the scheduling of inspections.**

* 1. It was confirmed that ongoing, constructive discussions were taking place with the DfE on risks relating to the delivery of Spending Review commitments. This included an agreement for the DfE to meet the costs of any shortfall from registration fees. Discussions were also taking place with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) on cost recovery for the inspection of prison education. The Board requested that they be kept informed on the progress of those discussions.

**Action Point: Board to be updated on discussions with the MoJ on recovering the cost of prison education inspection.**

* 1. The Board further discussed the performance data for quarter 3 and the relationship between some of the RAG ratings and their accompanying commentary. It was explained that decisions on the RAG ratings for the ‘Improved Engagement’ section were taken through discussions with relevant Directors, using evidence tested by the Executive Board. Board members agreed that more explanation of the amber ratings in the dashboard would be helpful and there should be further consideration of how the dashboard could be amended to ensure it remains a useful tool in improving performance.

**Action Point: Consider how the strategic dashboard could be amended to ensure it remains a useful tool in improving performance.**

* 1. Board members also suggested that the dashboard did not explain any regional variation in the data. It was agreed that it was not necessary to routinely provide the Board with each region’s individual dashboard, but that any significant regional-specific issues should be raised within the accompanying paper. Board members were also invited to attend either the Star Chamber meetings or the Inspection and Improvement Forums as part of their regional link.

**Action Point: Any significant regional-specific issues to be included within the next COO update.**

**Action Point: Board members to be invited to attend either Star Chamber meetings or the Inspection and Improvement Forums as part of their regional link.**

* 1. The Board discussed the current turnover of HMIs and how the retention of talented staff could be further improved in the future. The Board also discussed and welcomed ongoing efforts to recruit and train leaders within MATs to become contracted Ofsted Inspectors.
  2. The Board were updated on and discussed the ongoing work of the Unregistered Schools Taskforce.

1. **Finance report**
   1. The Board noted the Finance report for period 9.
   2. The Board agreed that the budget was being well-managed and that the current forecast underspend was appropriate and gave sufficient flexibility to avoid any overspend at the end of the financial year.
2. **Education update**
   1. The Board noted the update on issues within the Education directorate.
   2. The Board discussed the process for carrying out directive academy orders for inadequate maintained schools, and in particular the number of schools remaining without an identified sponsor or date for conversion. It was agreed that where there were significant delays in the process, consideration needed to be given to how the quality of education in those schools might be reported.
   3. The Board noted ongoing work examining how primary and secondary schools are implementing the curriculum and agreed the importance of doing this now given the autonomy with which schools currently operate. The need to draw on existing research was also noted.
3. **Social Care update**
   1. The Board noted the update on issues within the Social Care directorate, including progress on the current programmes of inspection. The decision to pilot a two-week standard inspection for local authorities that require improvement was also noted.
   2. The Board welcomed the positive engagement that was continuing to take place with the sector, in particular the positive feedback that had been received regarding the monitoring visits to inadequate local authorities.
   3. The Board also discussed the grade profile of the Single Inspection Framework (SIF) inspections and some of the reasons why this differed significantly from other remits.
4. **Ofsted’s role in the wider system**
   1. Matthew Purves gave a presentation to the Board explaining Ofsted’s status as a non-ministerial department, as well as its relationship with Government and accountability to Parliament. It was noted that funding for Ofsted was provided by HM Treasury, but that in practice the level of funding was determined by the DfE. The Board welcomed the fact that dialogue with the DfE at official level was generally positive and constructive.
5. **Audit and Risk Assurance Committee**
   1. The Board noted the minutes from the Committee’s meeting on 23 November 2016.
   2. Linda Farrant gave an overview of the main points of discussion at the Committee’s last meeting on 18 January.
   3. The decision by the National Audit Office to conduct a Value for Money study into Ofsted, which is expected to be published in early 2018, was noted.
6. **Any other business**
   1. Reference was made to a recent report by the British Humanist Association that suggested inspectors were not sufficiently focussing on the quality of sex and relationship education. The Board noted that the absence of specific terms within inspection reports is not evidence of a lack of focus on a particular issue. The Board discussed the current technology used to search specific terms within inspection reports, and improvements that might make it easier to respond to similar reports in the future.
   2. James Kempton thanked the Board and members of the executive for their support during his tenure as interim Chair.

**Forthcoming meetings:**

**NED/HMCI KiT meeting -** 22 March 2017, Room 802, Aviation House

**NED Regional Development meeting -** 22 March 2017, Room 202, Nottingham

**Awayday with the Executive Board -** 19 April 2017, London

**Board meeting -** 16 May 2017, Room 802, Aviation House