**Ofsted Board**

**Minutes of the meeting held on**

**Tuesday 26 September 2017**

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| Board members present:Others present:Observer:Executive support:Apologies: | Julius Weinberg, Chair John Cridland CBELinda FarrantJohn HughesAmanda Spielman, HMCIVenessa Willms OBE Matthew Coffey, Chief Operating Officer Louise Grainger, Director, Finance, Planning and CommercialSean Harford, National Director, EducationEleanor Schooling, National Director, Social Care Luke Tryl, Director, Corporate StrategyFor item 2 only:James Ford, Strategic Resourcing ManagerStuart Perkins, Head of Talent and ResourcingKaren Shepperson, Director, PeopleBianca Signora, Principal Officer, HR StrategyFor item 6 only:Amelia Walker, Deputy Director, Surveys and EvaluationJulia Kinniburgh, Director for Assessment, Curriculum, Qualifications and Accountability, Department for EducationAmy Finch, Private Secretary to HMCIJames Kempton, Paul Snell CBE |

**Summary of action points**

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| Relevant paper | Action | Owner |
| Strategy update | **77** – share copies of the one-page report on what the strategy means for each remit at the next Board meeting.  | Director, Corporate Strategy  |
| Workforce strategy | **82** – circulate the workforce strategy slides and invite comments from Board members. | Board Secretary |
| Workforce strategy | **83** – the Audit and Risk Committee to hold an agenda item on workloads at a future meeting | Linda Farrant and John Hughes |
| Workforce strategy | **84** – schedule an in-depth discussion on workload at a future Board meeting. | Board Secretary |
| Strategy update | **85** – schedule a discussion on the curriculum at a future Board meeting. | Board Secretary |
| Social care update | **86** – schedule a discussion on the performance of the social care system at a future Board meeting. | Board Secretary |

1. **Welcome, apologies and declarations of interest**
	1. The Chair welcomed Board members and attendees.
	2. The Chair noted apologies from Board members James Kempton and Paul Snell.
	3. Board members confirmed that they had no new conflicts of interest.
2. **Workforce Strategy**
	1. The Board discussed the complexities of changes in the workforce. Particular attention was paid to the demographic challenges for organisations that hire experienced sector leaders. A variety of issues were discussed such as the needs of younger employees that might have caring responsibilities for elderly relatives. Comparisons were made with policies to keep new parents in the workforce, where striking the right work/life balance is important for organisational productivity, not solely to meet social objectives.
	2. The Board discussed the long lead in time needed to develop a workforce strategy. Testing ideas with a company familiar with “big data” might help identify trends and trial solutions.
	3. The Board also discussed what skills a future inspection model might need. The increased availability of performance data and better predictive models does not negate the need for experience and credibility, as there is always a lag in what the data shows and a need for data interpretation. As the system gets better, our ambition should be that it improves further.
	4. The Board was shown several different future inspection models. They recommended we explore what other inspectorates are planning around the workforce, and how Ofsted’s purposes are best met by the different models.
	5. Board members were invited to read the slides and feedback to Karen directly [**action 82**].
3. **Strategic Risk Register**
	1. The Board held a deep-dive discussion on workloads. They discussed the likelihood that, despite reductions in HMI workload, the issue would remain high on the risk register. They discussed the extent to which workload is a risk and an actual issue.
	2. The Board said that the risk had been managed transparently and professionally, and recognised the work to identify and provide support at pressure points, such as stress caused by complaints. HMI had given positive informal feedback on this approach.
	3. The Board discussed the importance of asking the right questions when discussing workload, to make sure we get valid answers and do not unwittingly encourage disgruntlement.
	4. The Board agreed that the issue required more thinking and discussion. Linda Farrant, in her capacity as current Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee and John Hughes, as her successor, agreed to look at workload in a future Committee meeting [**action 83**]**.** The topic will be brought back to the Board at a later stage [**action 84**]**.**
4. **Changing the current model of short inspections**
	1. The Board noted the summary paper, initial consultation response and further consultation document.
	2. The Chief Operating Officer explained that, because we have adapted our proposals in light of feedback, our response to the first consultation does not address all the issues we intended it to. We are therefore consulting on further proposals to implement from Spring 2018.
	3. With respect to our consultation response, the Board discussed the balance between operational flexibility and precision. HMCI explained that the document does not define the circumstances in which conversions take longer than 48 hours to give regions the ability to prioritise in their context.
	4. The Board discussed how the team arrived at its proposals in the second consultation. The National Director, Education explained that the new proposals address feedback from the consultation and pilots, which indicated support for giving schools more time to address issues raised during short inspections. This avoids a sharp cliff edge between grades. He clarified that the top 20% highest risk good schools, where problems are likely to be more acute, would receive an immediate full inspection and that schools expected to be inadequate would be converted within a 7 day window.
	5. The National Director, Education, clarified that under the new proposals the clock would not reset for schools that needed a full inspection next time round, so that the maximum time would be another 20 months. Schools will also be able to request an inspection for before that.
	6. The Board discussed the importance of the framing and wording of the letter to schools, which inspectors cannot confirm as remaining good. This is especially important as, currently, any issues are tested by a full inspection before being made public. The National Director, Education explained that the template for the letter will be the same irrespective of the trajectory of the school. The Director, Corporate Strategy commented that the letters would also provide important information to parents.
	7. The Board discussed the importance of understanding and mitigating any unintended consequences of the change. The proposals are an opportunity to pilot policy ahead of the new inspection framework in 2019.
	8. The National Director, Education reassured the Board that much of our current thinking has been informed by the pilots as well as the consultation.
5. **Strategy Update**
	1. The Board noted the strategy update.
	2. The Director, Corporate Strategy reported the appointment of Professor Daniel Muijs as the new Head of Research.
	3. The Board discussed the positive sector responses to the curriculum work. The Director, Corporate Strategy, highlighted the section on ‘What this is not’ in the curriculum briefing.
	4. The Board discussed the messaging around the EBacc and creative subjects. The Director, Corporate Strategy said that while there is some research which relates the decline in arts and creative subjects to the EBacc, Ofsted’s view is that there is no need for there to be a trade-off between the two.
	5. The Board said they would welcome an in-depth discussion on the curriculum review at a future Board meeting [**action 84**].
	6. The Director, Corporate Strategy updated the Board on the strategy implementation work. Each member of the Executive Board has been designated as a ‘champion’ for one strategy work stream. The one-page summary documents on what the strategy means for each of our remits are nearly all complete and will be circulated in correspondence [**action 77**]. Policy teams have been encouraged to consider what they would drop as a result of the strategy, and the COO is reviewing all our change projects to make sure they align with the strategy.
	7. The Board discussed the proposed strategy metrics and the importance of reinforcing through them what people should stop doing. The Director, Finance said that she was working with the strategy team to make sure that our corporate reporting and strategy metrics are aligned. The Board recommended that we do not publish draft metrics on the strategy diagram before we have established yearly targets and milestones for each of the work streams.
	8. The Director, Corporate Strategy said he hoped the strategy publication would be picked up by the trade press as Ofsted as a force for improvement, and that we would be recognised as tackling the hard questions.
6. **Current and future research programme**
	1. The Board noted the update.
	2. The Board discussed the importance of being explicit about what we would not do as a result of investing more in research. They also discussed the balance of research undertaken through external commissioning and in house.
	3. The Deputy Director, Surveys and Evaluation, stated that as many projects need more than a two-year lead in time, it is more important to have an iterative and flexible programme.
7. **Minutes, matters arising, action log and forward look**
	1. The minutes were agreed without amendments.
8. **HMCI Update**
	1. The Board noted HMCI’s update.
	2. HMCI said she was encouraging a two-way flow of information with the DfE.
	3. HMCI confirmed that Learn Direct were not appealing our judgement, and that we are exploring what we can learn from the case. The Board discussed the broader issue of the likelihood of legal challenge in this area, and the question of how we are resourced to do that.
9. **COO Update**
	1. The Board congratulated the COO on his recent appointment to the promoted Senior Civil Service Pay Band 3 post as COO.
	2. The Board noted the COO update, which highlighted his concerns around delivering the volumes for independent schools.
	3. He also noted that the Ofsted apprenticeship programme was the ‘highly commended’ runner up in the annual CIPD awards.
	4. The COO explained the difference between aspirational and statutory targets for short inspections. In this year’s Corporate Plan we have identified and funded a higher-than-necessary aspirational target for short inspections. However, if there are other more pressing issues then the Executive Board will be asked to approve diverting resources away from that aspirational target, as long as we meet the statutory target. Having the two terms promotes transparency and helps us understand which activities have taken priority over short inspections.
	5. The COO reported on the National Audit Office review on value for money in school inspections. They would like to involve the Board, though probably not as a group, and so they may be in touch to arrange appointments.
10. **Education Update**
	1. The Board noted the education update.
	2. The Board discussed the importance of expectation management around teacher workload, in the light of the new question on inspection in the staff questionnaire.
11. **Social Care Update**
	1. The Board noted the social care update.
	2. The National Director, Social Care confirmed that the new framework for the inspection of local authority children’s services (ILACs) will include an overall judgement and will be published in November. She said that the framework works well and is accepted by the sector. The main risks of that local authorities feeling that they have too much contact with Ofsted, and of regional variation in implementation.
	3. The Board discussed the Requires Improvement judgement in social care and thanked the team for clarifying the pros and cons of its use at the last Board meeting.
	4. The Board agreed that it would discuss the overall performance of Social Care and the challenges of describing large complex organisations within the framework at a future occasion [**action 86]**.
12. **Finance Report (Period 4)**
	1. The Board noted the reported period 4 forecast underspend, the reported reasons for it, the further risks and opportunities that could further affect on it, and the trend of actual and forecast expenditure against our profiled budget.
	2. The Director, Finance commented that we would be drawing down on some contingency to deliver a number of projects had moved into phase 2.
13. **Medium Term Financial Plan and Spending Review Update**
	1. The Board noted the indicative budget position for 2018-19, the risks and opportunities that could affect this position, and the progress against the Spending Review.
	2. The COO outlined the work to review change projects in light of the new strategy. He outlined the high expectations around improving productivity and the small financial space there is to redesign delivery of inspection.
14. **Audit and Risk Assurance Committee**
	1. The Board thanked John Hughes for agreeing to chair the committee next year and when Linda Farrant’s term as a Board member ends.
	2. The committee Chair stated that the process for monitoring and evaluating risk in Ofsted was going well. Following completion of the Culture Audit actions, the Committee agreed that the Culture and Engagement Plan along with the results of the People Survey would be reported to the Board once they have been to the Executive Board.

**Forthcoming meetings:**

**Non-Executive Director breakfast meeting with HMCI:**

25 October 2017, 8.30am – 10.00am

HMCI’s office, Aviation House, London

**Ofsted Board meeting**

21 November 2017, 10.00am – 1.00pm

Room 802, Aviation House, London

**Dates for 2018 meetings will be agreed shortly**