

The Active Learning Trust

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE ACTIVE LEARNING TRUST *held on Thursday 10th December 2015 at The Lansdowne Club, London*

Directors Present:	Ms L. Adams (Chair)	Mr J. Beswick
	Mr C. Bush	Mrs J. Cutchey
	Mr G. Hely Hutchinson	Ms M. Lloyd
	Mr M. Kerr	Mr G. Peile
	Ms M. Toft	
Also Present:	Mr D. Hilton (Head of Standards)	
	Mrs K. Jarvis (Clerk)	
	Mr C. Paskell (Director of Finance and Operations)	
Invited Guests:	Mr C. D'Cunha (Principal at Chantry Academy)	
	Mr T. Folley (Lead of Ipswich Hub)	
	Mr S. McAlpine (External Auditor)	

MINUTES

72. WELCOME & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Ms Adams opened the meeting by welcoming all present and introductions were made. Apologies had been received from Mr Bateson & Mr Staite.

73. AUDITORS REPORT & ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

Mrs McAlpine was invited to give a verbal report prior to the Annual Accounts being considered. He spoke about the school visits that had taken place, explaining that the external auditors had visited a sample group of six sites, and the internal auditors had visited all sites.

He explained that his role, as external auditor, was to verify the accounts produced by Caton & Fry, including income, expenditure, assets, liabilities and payroll.

Mr McAlpine was complimentary about the way in which ALT has moved on from previous audits, recognising that procedures are now embedded, and central resources have been improved to include Hub Leads, Governance Lead and change of Director of Finance. He

confirmed there had been a step change in terms of organisation and administration. He felt that any issues raised were minor in nature, and there were considerably fewer than last year. He asked that his thanks be placed on record to the staff at Caton & Fry and to Mr Paskell, before outlining some changes that will be implemented for next year's accounting period due to changes in regulations.

Directors acknowledged that they had received and studied the accounts prior to the meeting. Mr Paskell pointed out minor changes that had been made in response to Directors input

Ms Adams thanked Mr McAlpine for his work.

The Board acknowledged his report agreed that the Audited Accounts and recommended the accounts to the Annual General Meeting of the Trust for acceptance.

Mr McAlpine left the meeting at this point.

74. REPORT & PRESENTATION : CHANTRY ACADEMY AND THE IPSWICH HUB

Mr Folley gave an informative presentation on his role as Hub Lead for the Ipswich Hub, and how this links in the SLT structure. He explained that his role covers four main areas:-

1. Strategic Link; including half-termly meetings with headteachers, covering external reviews and recommendations.
2. Hub Lead; including Hub Conferences, sharing priorities and good practise, training events
3. ALT Support Overview; including links with ALT leads on Behaviour and Standards
4. Direct Support; eg challenge in Maths, strengthening of middle leaders, teaching and learning action group.

Directors were asked to note that the support and input received from ALT was praised in the Chantry HMI report. In response to a question from Mrs Lloyd, Mr Folley explained that the other hubs within ALT work on a similar (although not exactly the same) set-up. Mr Peile stated that the Lowestoft hub is also working very well, with the Cambridgeshire hub improving with the appointment of a new Hub Lead.

In response to a question from Mr Kerr, Mr Folley explained that within a typical working month he would spend ten to fifteen days in schools, according to where he is most needed. Mr Bush commented that none of the Hub Leads work for ALT full-time.

Ms Adams thanked Mr Folley for his report which gave Directors a keen insight into his role.

Mr D'Cunha took Directors through the key points of the recent Ofsted monitoring visit before showing a short video from Academy TV showcasing Chantry staff, pupils and events. He referred to his report (that had been previously circulated). Points to note included:-

- Last year Chantry had significant changes in leadership – this has settled
- The Suffolk New College Board disbanded in March 2015, with some ALT Board members forming a New Academies Trust Board until ALT took over in September 2015.
- Mr D'Cunha is the 4th Principal in one year
- Everything has changed, with Chantry effectively developing as a new school

- Supportive Parents Form in place
- Rising role shows parental support in the community – full in Year 7 for September 2016
- Chantry is in an area of high deprivation, with 50% of pupils generating pupil premium funding
- Clear vision for the future:
 - Versatile
 - Aspiration
 - Learned
 - Understanding
 - Engaged
 - Determined
- Ofsted have recognised the improvements made, and removed the embargo for the appointment of NQT
- The 'R' and 'C' systems have been introduced – Rewards and Consequences – for behaviour and achievement
- Targets set at 4 levels of progress
- Ofsted recognised that Chantry is well supported by ALT and “confident relationship with thrive”
- Inspector said “some of the best teaching seen for a school in special measures”, but teaching is inconsistent
- Inspector confident going in the right direction, but need to be aware of fragility due to so many new things in place
- The Academy Action Plan will be rewritten in light of the monitoring visit

Mr Hely-Hutchinson asked about restructuring. Mr D’Cunha stated that it was necessary. He explained that pupil premium funding had been included in the main budget in the past, and this needed to be removed, reducing available funds for staffing. He went on to explain that the leadership team has also been restructured, including the appointment of an external candidate.

Maths and IT have been improved new appointments, and a new Head of IT has been appointed for a January 2016 start. Staff moral is high and team spirit is good. Mr D’Cunha believes this is because staff have been involved at all levels. Pupils are appreciative of the work that is going on for their benefit, and feel valued .

Mr D’Cunha said how pleased he was that the newly formed governing body are supportive and engaged. He informed directors that all members of the SLT (himself included) have a teaching commitment.

Ms Adams thanked Mr D’Cunha for his enlightening report, asked that Mr D’Cunha pass on their thanks and congratulations to the staff and said that Directors look forward to hearing more of the continuing progress of Chantry in the future.

Mr D’Cunha and Mr Folley left the meeting at this point.

75. MINUTES & MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 6th OCTOBER 2015

The Minutes were accepted as a true record, with no technical corrections.

61. Some data omitted from the Kingsfield report had been provided, but attendance data is still missing. This will be requested from the Headteacher and circulated.

62. Mr Peile reported that, following an initial meeting with an advisor, concerns had been raised about the format that the NGA have proposed for a Board review, therefore this will be reconsidered. Ms Adams reported that she would seek advice from another MAT that she is in contact with.

68. Directors were invited to attend one of the Governor events scheduled for April 12th, 13th, and 14th in Lowestoft, Ipswich and Ely respectively.

70. Declarations of Interest are listed on the ALT website as required.

76. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

The minutes of the following meetings, that were held on 6th October 2015, were accepted:

- (i) Finance & General Purposes Committee
- (ii) Remuneration & Personnel Committee
- (iii) Audit Committee

77. COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Mr Peile asked Directors to consider his report, and explained that the DfE Financial Controls Document no longer requires Trust to hold separate Audit Committee meetings. He suggested that the Audit Committee merge with the Finance & General Purposes Committee, with members being Ms Adams, Mr Beswick, Mr Hely-Hutchinson and Mr Kerr. Mr Beswick agreed to Chair. Mrs Cutchey will move to the Personnel Committee.

The Board approved the proposals for change to the Committee Structure, and membership as set out above, from 2016 onwards.

78. CHAIR'S ACTIONS

(i) Admission Arrangements

Ms Adams explained that she had taken a Chair's Action to approve the consultation of admission arrangements for 2017/18 due to the need to meet statutory deadlines.

79. TRUST BUSINESS PLAN

Mr Peile took directors through his report on the updated Trust Business Plan which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

The Board acknowledged the changes highlighted by Mr Peile, accepted the report and recommended that the Plan for 2016/17 and beyond be tabled for approval at the Annual General Meeting.

80. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

Mr Peile: reported that he had received a letter from the Regional Schools Commissioner, suggesting that Trusts may like to consider having members who are not directors. This would have significant implications should it be approved and it was agreed this be considered at a future meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 9th February 2016.