

**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**OF THE ACTIVE LEARNING TRUST**

***held on Thursday 11th July 2019***

***at The Lansdowne Club, London***

**MINUTES**

Directors Present: Ms L. Adams Mr D. Bateson OBE

Mr J. Beswick Prof. A. Boddison

Mr C. Bush Mrs J. Cutchey

Mr R. Dool Ms M. Lloyd

Members Present: Mrs H. Capron Mr S. Staite

Officers Present: Mr D. Hilton Mrs K. Jarvis

Mrs J. Parke Mr C. Paskell

Mrs J. Steel Ms M. Toft

Also Present: Mr S. Chamberlain CEO-elect

Mr R. Martin Deputy Head of Chesterton Primary School

Mrs S. Pritchard Head of Kingsfield Primary School

Mrs J. Viner Head of Reydon Primary School

**57.** **WELCOME & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

All present introduced themselves and their role at the meeting. Particular welcome was made to all guests, including Mr Stephen Chamberlain, CEO-elect.

Apologies for absence had been received prior to the meeting from Mr Hely Hutchinson and Mr Kerr.

No new interests were declared for items on the agenda.

**58. LEADING ACTIVE LEARNING ADVANCED PRESENTATION**

Following an introduction from Ms Toft of Leading Active Learning Advanced (LAL(A)) including its history and the number of staff who have already completed the course, Mr Richard Martin, Deputy Head at Chesterton Primary School spoke about his experience of the 2018/19 LAL(A) programme, including how it had benefited him personally and his school. He defined his project as one of developing his role as a leader and how the main focus was linked to his own personal development, performance management and increasing ability to promote ability in himself and others. Mr Martin spoke about how LAL(A) had allowed him to grow as a leader, gain confidence in his role, and enabled him to have a positive impact on the teaching and learning of pupils. He was supported throughout by Trust headteachers, Ambition Leadership and high quality tutorials that encouraged challenge in school and reflective analysis.

Ms Lloyd stated that, as Chair of governors at Chesterton Primary School, she had seen a marked difference in Mr Martin’s confidence and impact since last September. She added that he had grown into the role.

Mr Bateson stated that it was fantastic to hear from developing leaders within the Trust.

Mr Chamberlain asked Mr Martin what he felt he had learnt about himself during the course. Mr Martin replied that he had investigated and developed his own leadership style and is now confident in his ability to coach other members of staff. He added that it has become clear to him throughout the year that ALT values CPD, is committed to ‘growing’ its own staff, and carries through the promises made at interview regarding prospective progress and opportunities. Mr Bush reminded Trustees that this is part of the ALT Vision Statement.

Ms Adams asked if he had remained in contact with the other people on the course. Mr Martin explained that a support group was in place during the course and this has continued, which will allow colleagues of a similar level to support each other going forward. Ms Toft added that this year’s cohort are asked to ‘buddy’ with next year’s cohort so that they can pass down their own experiences, and also continue to work on coaching skills.

Prof Boddison asked if there was anything the Trust could do to capture this work. Mr Bush explained that the CPD programme of ALT is well respected and often praised. The communications company that support the Trust produce case studies each year.

***Ms Adams thanked Mr Martin for attending and congratulated him on his obvious success.***

**59. SCHOOL REPORTS & PRESENTATIONS:**

Trustees confirmed that they had reviewed the reports that Mrs Pritchard and Mrs Viner had provided prior to the meeting. Ms Adams asked that the heads highlight one or two areas in detail, following which a discussion would take place regarding the content of the Reports.

**Kingsfield Primary School (KPS)**

Mrs Pritchard made reference to the positive progress on results at Kingsfield, which continue to improve. She stated that she wanted to explain the high level of exclusions that have resulted from the challenging behaviour being experienced at Kingsfield and the time and effort that is taken away from teaching and learning. Staff have been assaulted, leading Mrs Pritchard to the decision that she should intervene on a regular basis so that staff are not put in harm’s way. Referrals have been made and support has been requested from outside agencies, but this is sporadic, difficult to access or non-effective. ALT Central staff have supported Mrs Pritchard and Kingsfield heavily, with Mr Chester basing himself at Kingsfield for a set number of days each week, and the LA have praised the inclusive ethos of the school. A pastoral worker role has not been filled due to budget constraints. Mrs Pritchard made Trustees aware that a grant for £10k has been secured from the Opportunities Area funding to provide a Nurture Provision. This will include high quality training, and allow Kingsfield to develop provision for children most in need alongside their Kingsfield Kites provision for pupils with behavioural issues. She added that a further £2k grant has been bid for to support early intervention for speech and language.

Mr Dool asked what CPD Kingsfield offers staff. Mrs Pritchard replied that this is mostly in-house at present, however extensive training has been provided to all teachers on schemes of work introduced such as Literacy Tree and Maths No Problem. Subject leads have visited other Trust schools and assistant heads have been supported to become qualified County Moderators.

Prof. Boddison asked what proportion of CPD is delivered by the SENCo. Mrs Pritchard explained that this is minimal at present as Kingsfield has a SENCo (on loan from Cromwell Community College) for two days per week. There are plans to increase this using the Opportunities Area funding, and using the expertise of Mr Simon Bainbridge and his Highfield team. STEPS training has been scheduled. Prof. Boddison made reference to the national picture of SENCos, and how there is a trend to move them away from paperwork and into the classroom by employing non-teachers to complete the extensive paperwork needed. Mrs Pritchard agreed that the administrative part of the role is extensive, giving the example of 26 early health assessments being completed at Kingsfield this year. It was established that Kingsfield SEND staff are aware of, and use, the resources provided by NASEN.

Prof. Boddison made reference to Ofsted wanting to see back stories for any permanent exclusions. Mrs Pritchard is confident that evidence is in place.

Mr Bateson praised the improving progress data and asked if there were any common denominators. Mrs Pritchard explained that these could be identified as environmental issues. Kingsfield is in an area of high deprivation and home lives are often chaotic, with no boundaries. Parental education is offered by school, but parents are reluctant to engage. She added that she feels issues have gone unidentified in the past, eg speech and language, and the new funding will enable the school to screen all children of Reception age with a view to identifying issues and providing early intervention. She added that 47% of pupils at Kingsfield have a safeguarding file and there is a higher than average number of young carers.

Mrs Cutchey pointed out that the data for Free School Meals is low given the deprivation of the area. Mrs Pritchard agreed. There are working parents, but these are on low incomes and unfortunately there is a stigma attached to accessing support through official channels.

Mrs Cutchey asked about the Early Years Improvement Plan, where good levels of development are slightly up. Mrs Pritchard said that this is not surprising as the children joined the school with very low starting points.

**Reydon Primary School (REY)**

Mrs Viner started by saying how delighted she and her staff had been of the last Ofsted report. Since this visit, Reydon has continued to grow successfully. Mrs Viner highlighted the continuing collaboration with the North Suffolk Hub of ALT schools, using examples of Drama, School Councils, Science projects and CHIMP to show how the schools work together to improve educational opportunities for pupils across the hub.

Mrs Cutchey asked about the improvement in persistent absence figures. Mrs Viner explained that PA has been addressed through the use of pupil premium by involving an EWO service. Following a question from Mr Dool, she explained how the figures move throughout the year with an end of year prediction of 7%.

Mr Bush asked about SATs results. Mrs Viner explained that last year’s cohort were strong, resulting in good results. Within this year’s cohort of 26 children, 4 arrived during year 6 with below average prior attainment, 1 child was absent for SATs due to a family holiday, 1 child was off sick and 1 left the week before. There is also a high percentage of SEN in this year group. Analysis work has been completed, and if the 4 late starters and 1 on holiday are removed from the data the combined results would reach 82%.

Mr Bush asked Mrs Viner to talk about the cultural enrichment developed at Reydon. She spoke about how the curriculum is designed to fit the needs of the students, eg to address the low diversity in the area. This is in collaboration with the North Suffolk Hub, to provide an enriched programme, and includes activities such as a residential trip abroad, and Bollywood dancing.

Ms Adams asked if governors challenge Mrs Viner. Mrs Viner was clear that she feels challenged, and stated that she feels the school benefits from having a range and depth of experience and backgrounds in the governing body, and they have a good understanding of the school and its situation. She added that there were 14 governor visit reports presented at the last meeting. Mrs Viner added that she is a governor of another Trust school in the area, which adds another layer of experience and opportunity that she is aiming for other hub schools to duplicate.

Mr Bush asked why Mrs Viner felt the North Suffolk Hub was so successful. Mrs Viner replied that the heads have discussed this as a group and concluded that the main reason is that they all have the same goals and work together to support and achieve these. They are passionate about their individual schools, but also have a clear vision to ensure all the schools are successful.

***Ms Adams thanked Mrs Pritchard and Mrs Viner for attending and for their reports. They, and Mr Martin, left the meeting at this point.***

**60.** **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 23rd MAY 2019**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd May 2019 were accepted as a true record. There

were no matters arising.

**61.** **MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**

Trustees were asked to note the minutes of the meetings held for the Finance Committee and the Audit Committee held on 23rd May 2019. It was also noted that the Personnel & Remuneration Committee did not meet on 23rd May.

***Trustees noted the content of the minutes as presented.***

**62. CHAIR’S ACTIONS**

Ms Adams informed Trustees that she had not undertaken any chair’s actions since the last meeting.

**63. PRIMARY DATA**

Mrs Parke distributed a data pack giving primary Early Years Foundation Stage and KS1 & KS2 SATS. She took Trustees through the data, highlighting areas of note:

EYFS: pupils are generally reaching expected standards for Good Levels of Development. 10 schools are at expected levels or above, and 5 are below. It should be noted that Hillside Primary School data is affected by student mobility, and Sidegate Primary School included pupils in the specialist provision class.

Year 1 Phonics: pupils were tested at the end of June, with targets set at national expectations or above. Earith Primary School suffers in this data set because there are only 11 children, including several SEND.

KS1 Reading: progression at Kingsfield Primary School is high (47% in 2018 to 68% in 2019). This is a direct impact of the Literacy Tree reading scheme.

KS1 Writing: This is the weakest element nationally, and shows a typical pattern for Trust data, however history shows that value is added by the end of KS2.

KS2 Writing & Maths: Some good results that were predicted. Progress is mostly good due to low starting points.

KS2 Reading: a disappointing set of data, that was not predicted following PIXl testing. National figures have dropped by 2% and boys have dropped by 9%. Mrs Parke stated that the School Improvement Team will be investigating why standards were not met, analysing results of individual children, and will report back to the Board in the Autumn term.

KS2 Combined. The impact of the reading assessments has seen a drop against the national average. Burrowmoor and Kingsfield Primary Schools have improved.

Hub Analysis: Cambridgeshire have improved, Ipswich have dropped (although Hillside data will be adjusted to allow for a number of dis-applied pupils), North Suffolk remain strong.

Going forward: areas for improvement will be identified. High Prior Attainment data will be looked at closely. Mr Hilton stated that the School Improvement Team will be assessing, learning from the successes and considering how to sustain success in the future.

Mr Hilton gave a presentation on the key points of where schools are succeeding and why. This included where the Trust, Hubs and school are now, where improvement is required, and how this is being addressed. Planned strategies include:

* School Improvement Strategy now adds Challenge 3 school leaders to the programme
* Reading Review Autumn 2019 – all schools
* Greater consistency in the teaching of English and Mathematics through engagement with DfE approved schemes Mathematics (e.g. Maths No Problem and Power Maths) and English programmes (e.g. Power of Reading and Literacy Tree)
* Whole Trust Oracy Programme planned for 2019-2020
* Development of Curriculum Review in all Challenge 1 schools Autumn 1
* Subject Specialist Programmes – developing the capacity

Ms Lloyd asked how success will be rolled out across the Trust. Mr Hilton replied that areas where schools are weaker will be supported by staff who have the expertise, and that we know work. Mr Bush added that we need to develop a coherent strategy about how this will work across. He gave examples of Westwood Primary School supporting Grove Primary School and Red Oak Primary School supporting in specific areas in other schools as good working practise.

Mrs Cutchey cited stability in the North Suffolk hub, with no recent changes in leadership, as a strength that has led to consistency and consolidation.

Mr Chamberlain asked what engagement there is in English Hubs. Ms Lloyd replied that she was aware of links with the Hackney English Hub. Mr Chamberlain offered that the Hub in Colchester would be closer.

Prof. Boddison suggested that the Trust should engage with a research partner to investigate results and trends. Mr Bush reminded Trustees that the Trust has links with the University of Cambridge and Alan Howe that could be explored to facilitate this.

**64. POLICY & CURRICULUM STATEMENTS & POCESSES**

Trustees confirm that they had had opportunity to review the updated Policy Statement on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education and the Trust guidance on Pecuniary Interests. Both were adopted and will be distributed to schools.

**65. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER’S REPORT**

Trustees confirmed that they had read the report from the CEO that had been circulated prior to the meeting. Mr Bush highlighted the following:

Work to address recommendations from the Ofsted Summary Evaluation continues.

Potential for Expansion remains a high priority. There has been no movement on the Wisbech development or the Ipswich free school development. Wave 14 will give the opportunity to bid for a special free school in Norwich. There is a clear indication that no restrictions to area will be made in future. Mr Bush added that the Trust has been approached to consider an EMB special school that has recently been made inadequate. This will be explored carefully.

Mr Bush stated he is heartened by the Cambridgeshire approach to Linc 19, where it has been agreed that the LA will fund for the next four years. It is known that the DfE are currently reviewing their procedures, and it is hoped that a future funding application will be successful.

There is considerable concern that Suffolk are not able to deliver their statutory responsibilities for SEND. The DfE now have input into this area, and schools are being asked if they have capacity to take a SEND unit. From ALT schools, Chantry Academy and Red Oak Primary School could potentially help as part of a new build programme, and Mr Bainbridge has initiated high level meetings with the Suffolk SEND team.

SEND support in Cambridgeshire is slightly better, with the LA having sound procedures, but there is a lack of personnel in place, resulting in a shortfall in provision.

The School Improvement Plan model has been refined, and will continue to be refined as appropriate. Challenge partner work will increase from September and will work alongside the school review models, curriculum development reviews and school partnership reviews. There will be a transparent paperwork trail.

One highlight/area of concern for each school given as part of the schools update.

Ms Toft spoke about the Trust priority of good mental health, and informed Trustees of the work taking place in partnership with Minds Ahead. She added that the Trust have been invited to be part of a select committee group being chaired by Nicky Morgan on this important and high profile subject.

The central support team has been enhanced by the addition of an IT Technician and a Trust IT Strategy is being written in readiness for September.

Mr Bush recently hosted a successful visit from Paul Whiteman, NAHT.

Trustees were referred to the detailed report from the Trust Compliance Officer, including a recommendation to update the Trust’s Records Retention Policy.

***Trustees noted the content of the report and the activities across the Trust to support staff and pupils. Trustees approved the recommendation to the Trust’s Records Retention Policy.***

**66. RISK REGISTER**

Mr Bush explained that there had been no updates to the Risk Register since the last meeting, but this area would remain a standing agenda item.

**67. SAFEGUARDING**

Ms Toft informed Trustees that there had been amendments to the Keeping Children Safe in Education document issued by the DfE that needed to be embedded into school documents for September 2019. To support this, the Trust Policy on Safeguarding has been updated to show the amendments required and will be distributed to schools in readiness for the new academic year.

68**. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

1. Venue for Future Meetings. Mrs Jarvis asked if Trustees were able to recommend a venue that could host future Board meetings. She explained that alternatives were being considered as the cost of the Lansdowne Club is approx. £6,000 per year.
2. Whistleblowing. Mr Beswick explained that due to changes in the Academies Financial Handbook it was now a requirement for the Board to have a nominated member for Whistleblowing. This is in addition to Mrs Steel being named the Trust staff nominated person. It was agreed that Mrs Jarvis would investigate good practise from other educational establishments so that a robust system could be put in place. Trustees who would like to volunteer for the role were asked to contact Mrs Jarvis individually.
3. Chair of the Board. Mrs Jarvis informed Trustees that one nomination for the role of Chair had been received from Mr Dool. Following consideration of due process, Mr Dool was elected as Chair with effect from 1st September 2019**.**

**69. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Trustees agreed the meeting schedule that had been circulated with the agenda.

***Mr Bush gave a vote of thanks to Ms Adams for her time and commitment as Chair of the Board of Trustees. All Trustees are delighted that Ms Adams will continue as Member of the Trust, and echoed Mr Bush’s thoughts and good wishes.***