

The Active Learning Trust

**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF THE ACTIVE LEARNING TRUST
*held on Thursday 12th December 2019
at The Lansdowne Club, London***

MINUTES

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| Directors Present: | Mr J. Beswick Mrs J. Cutchey Mr G. Hely-Hutchinson | Mr A. Boddison Mr R. Dool Ms M. Lloyd |
| Members Present: | Ms L. Adams | |
| Officers Present: | Mr S. Chamberlain Mrs K. Jarvis Ms M. Toft | Mr D. Hilton Mr C. Paskell |
| Invited Headteachers: | Mrs H. Davies Ms T. Jackson | Head of Isle of Ely Primary School Head of Chesterton Primary School |

13. WELCOME & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received prior to the meeting from Mr Bateson, Mr Bush, Mrs Capron, Mr Kerr, Mr Staite and Mrs Steel.

No new interests were declared for items on the agenda.

Mr Dool informed all present that Mr Staite had tendered his resignation as a member due to other commitments.

14. SCHOOL REPORTS & PRESENTATIONS:

Chesterton Primary School (CPS)

Trustees confirmed that they had reviewed the report that Ms Jackson had provided prior to the meeting. As agreed at the last meeting, three questions/areas had been identified that Trustees had asked Ms Jackson respond to.

Prepared Question 1

There was a dip in EYFS results in 2019, can you share your priorities to ensure improved results next year?

Ms Jackson responded with: There were 17 pupils in last year's cohort, 9 of whom were EAL. This is not the case this year, with 29 children in the current Year 6. The Year 6 teacher has undertaken substantial training and has a better understanding this year and is aware of the expectations. Monitoring is continual. There is a good Level of Development target of 70%, which is challenging but achievable.

Prepared Question 2

What are your predictions for Year 6 next summer? Do you anticipate results meeting national outcomes?

It is anticipated that 50% to 54% of the Year 6 cohort will reach national average outcomes. One child, who joined the school at the beginning of December, has no English and will be dis-applied. One will not sit the tests as he is due to leave at Easter. Two pupils will reach maths but not English. 13 pupils are expected to reach English expectations.

Prepared Question 3

Given that the school is no longer commissioning services from Place2Be, can you reassure Trustees that the needs of vulnerable children and those at risk of exclusion are being met? – what is currently in place and what evidence do you have of impact?

School have employed the services of Ollie & The Super Powers, which is a counselling based service that supports pupils with emotional issues. Twelve children have accessed the programme since September, and ten of those children have showed improvement. With savings from Place2Be, CPS have been able to fund a Pastoral Support Worker for four afternoons a week, and this will be extended to whole days after Easter, giving greater coverage and support than the previous service. Fixed term exclusion figures have improved from 43.5 days at this time last year to 20 days this year. There is now support in school every day, whereas Place2Be were only in school once per week. Punctuality and attendance have also improved, the Family Support Worker has been able to establish good relationships with parents, and lunchtime activities have been enhanced, following a pupil questionnaire initiated by Pupil Voice.

Mr Dool asked Mr Chamberlain and Mr Hilton if they would like to comment on Ms Jackson's responses to the prepared questions. Mr Hilton reminded Trustees that it had been a challenging time for Chesterton prior to Ms Jackson starting. The Headteacher and Deputy Head had both left and Ms Jackson was given the brief to stabilise the schools. However, he added that SLT now view Chesterton a school of concern due to the changes. Mr Chamberlain stated that there is a need to ensure that Chesterton's curriculum is right, and install a sense of pride in the teachers. He added that he is considering employing a SENCo to work across clusters to support and build capacity. There is substantial SEND expertise within the Trust, and on the Board, which should be utilised to maximum advantage. Mr Boddison cautioned that each school must have a qualified SENCo going forward and that this will become legislation going forward, however he welcomed the idea of a cluster SENCo at a strategic level. In response to a question, Mr Chamberlain confirmed that schools do not have assistant SENCos at present, which means SENCos spend a vast amount of time on paperwork. Mr Chamberlain informed Trustees that the Trust has agreed to fund and support a colleague through the advanced SENCo course.

Ms Lloyd asked why the targets for EYFS and GLD are not 100%. Ms Jackson replied that 100% would be an unrealistic target as there are some identified children that will not reach expected levels. Mr Boddison asked if children with EHCPs will reach their target – Ms Jackson affirmed that EHCP pupils will reach their individual targets, but these might not be the national expected levels.

Mr Hilton stated that Ms Jackson has worked hard to bring staff on board, and improvements have been made which are being embedded. Mr Chamberlain agreed, and added that he planned to discuss alternative provision with Cambridgeshire LA to seek a base funding structure that could support provision. Pupils in danger of being permanently excluded are being identified so that support can be given.

Mrs Cutchey asked if there is any evidence that the tweaks to the curriculum already implemented have been effective. Ms Jackson replied that it is too early for solid evidence, but she believes they are working.

Mr Dool thanked Ms Jackson for attending and for her report.

Isle of Ely Primary School (IOE)

Trustees confirmed that they had reviewed the report that Mrs Davies had provided prior to the meeting. There were also three questions identified for the Isle of Ely Primary School.

Prepared Question 1

The staff are relatively inexperienced. How are you planning to develop subject leadership and curriculum intent?

Ms Davies agreed that staff are inexperienced with the IOE having a high proportion of NQTs. Teachers and TAs have been placed into curriculum teams and are working as a team to support each other, with less experienced staff working with more experienced teachers. Internal and external training has been integral, examples of this were given as Coaching, LAL, NQT CPD, subject days, White Rose training, partnership with Kings Ely, mastery readiness and specialist maths training.

Mr Dool asked if Ms Davies has seen any impact of training. Mrs Davies replied that she had. Poor behaviour has been tackled, led by the SENCo. The Marking Policy has improved and now supports staff to improve the use of questioning and a new phonics scheme has been introduced for January 2020 (Read, Write, Inc). Curriculum development is ongoing, with dyslexia and phonics as high priorities. Mr Hilton added that the curriculum is being re-written.

Prepared Question 2

What are your predictions for Year 6 next summer? Do you anticipate results meeting national outcomes?

Ms Davies reminded Trustees that IOE do not have a Year 6 cohort yet, but Year 5 have been assessed using PIXl and predictions are that 91% will reach age related for reading, 77% for writing and 80% for maths. Greater depth predictions are 20% for reading, 11% for writing and 23% for maths. Mr Hilton pointed out that there are currently two classes of 17, which is a luxury, and teaching needs to be crafted carefully to maximise learning. He added that staff should be asking why pupils would not reach national expectations. Teaching spaces should be considered and pupils need to be encouraged to build up resilience.

Prepared Question 3

A Trust priority in 2019/20 is the development of Oracy education. How is your Oracy lead taking forward this priority in your school – what is the focus and what early signs do you have of impact? How far is the work of the Oracy lead being connected with your trainees lead practioner to maximise benefits to your pupils through excellent teaching.

Mrs Davies stated that Oracy is being led by a keen teacher who enjoys the subject area. There has been a lot of baseline work within his class, which is being rolled out to KS2 after Christmas. One concern identified was that children seemed anxious of 'getting it wrong', but following work on this, all pupils now contribute. The teacher will work with TAs next tern to improve their understanding. Ms Davies added "Oracy fits extremely well with other things we are trying to do in school, for example generic skills".

Mrs Cutchey asked if, given that the school has been built year-on-year, whether there have been any issues with recruitment. Mrs Davies confirmed that recruitment has been difficult, with lots of changes in September 2019.

Mr Boddison asked if apprenticeships are used at IOE so that school can assess the Apprenticeship Levy. Mr Chamberlain replied plans for apprenticeships are covered in his CEO report.

Mr Dool thanked Mrs Davies for attending and for her report.

Mrs Davies and Ms Jackson left the meeting at this point.

15. Presentation of Annual Accounts

Mr Gary Miller from Price Bailey, Auditors, took Trustees through the annual accounts. He explained the thorough auditing process that had been completed, and the arrangements under which the audit had taken place, taking into consideration Companies and Charities Acts. The Management Letter was explained, including statutory responsibilities and key risks were identified. He informed Trustees that there is nothing outstanding and the accounts are ready for submission.

The key risks were explained in more detail, with Trustees given the opportunity to question Mr Miller on the findings. The Trustees were satisfied with responses, and pleased to hear that Price Bailey do not consider there any major issues to address, with Mr Miller stating that the Active Learning Trust is in a secure financial position, with no systematic problems or errors in accounting procedures.

Mr Boddison asked how ALT compare with other Trusts Price Bailey work with, and if there is anything Trustees should consider. Mr Miller replied that ALT does all that is expected to meet statutory requirements and he is not aware of any issues arising from the Trust risk register. Mr Paskell read out a statement from Mr Kerr (in his absence) which stated that he liked the style of the letter and the professional approach from Price Bailey. It was agreed that Mr Paskell will provide Trustees with a copy of The Charities Commission Guide for Trustees and Governors via Foldr.

Mr Dool asked if Trustees were agreed that the Accounts should be presented to Members at the AGM for approval. The Trustees present agreed.

All involved with the process were thanked for their input and Mr Miller left the meeting at this point.

16. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 17th October 2019

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10th October 2019 were accepted as a true record. It was noted that Ms Toft was present, although her name was omitted from the list of those present.

Action Point 1: Trustees confirmed they had received a report from Mr Hilton, Director of Standards and School Improvement, regarding reading.

Action Point 2: Trustees did not have strong view on moving the Summer meeting to Ely.

Action Point 3: Mrs Jarvis has confirmed the expectations for a Trustee taking on a link role for Whistle Blowing and has discussed this with Mr Dool (who has agreed to act in this capacity).

Action Point 4: Mrs Jarvis confirmed that all Trustees have been set up with an ALT email address and access to Foldr.

Action Point 5: The strategic review is covered under separate agenda item.

Trustees approved the Minutes of the meeting held on 10th October 2019 as a true record.

17. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

Trustees were asked to note the minutes from the Finance committee and the Audit committee meetings that were held on 10th October 2019.

Trustees were asked to note that the Remuneration Committee had agreed headteacher Pay Awards for September 2019 upon receipt of a report and recommendations from Mrs Steel and Mr Bush.

Trustees noted the content of the minutes from the committee meetings held on 10th October 2019 and noted that the process for reviewing headteacher pay had been completed successfully in line with the ALT Pay Policy.

18. CHAIR'S ACTIONS

Mr Dool informed Trustees that there have been no Chair's Action since the last meeting.

19. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Trustees confirmed that they had read the report from the CEO that had been circulated prior to the meeting. The following points were highlighted:

- To initiate work on the strategic review, HT and SLT versions of a table to assess views has been produced and distributed for completion. These will be collated and form the basis of the next stage of Mr Chamberlain's work. Trustees are asked to complete a similar exercise in readiness for the February Board meeting.
- Mr Chamberlain believes a 'sound bite' or 'tag line' is needed to strengthen the perception of belonging to ALT: This will be reviewed as part of the strategic review, but the current working title is: Active Learners : Active Leaders : Active Citizens.
- CPD work is needed to improve the involvement of governors.
- The current vision statement does not relate to, or capture the voice of, children. Mr Chamberlain informed Trustees that it was agreed at the recent Heads conference that an ALT child group will be introduced with a 'Pupil Charter'.
- Mr Dool suggested that the review should also engage with external stakeholders, with a view to the Trust being more outward looking. Mr Chamberlain agreed, explaining that there are plans to visit Trusts of similar size, but with differing operating models.
- Mr Chamberlain will share his initial plans on Foldr.
- Mr Chamberlain asked Trustees to take particular note of the excellent work being completed by Mrs Brooks on data analysis using Insight.
- A discussion took place around the current School Improvement model, and the need for the team to be tighter and more proactive. Through Insight, the SIT are now well equipped with up-to-date internal and national comparison data, enabling them to initiate relevant conversation with headteachers during visits. Members of the team and headteachers will be made aware of where their levels of accountability and responsibility lie.
- The School RAG rated data will be expanded and refined to include a Fine Grade Status alongside Ofsted gradings (The RAG rating appendix was withdrawn from the meeting papers to update its accuracy and consistency). This will give a level that the SIT consider appropriate. The AIG process will also be refined to include more relevant context.
- Mr Chamberlain would like to produce an 'Excellence Register' to celebrate areas that the Trust and its school excel in. This would include areas that are "quietly brilliant" and form a basis to identify work that can be shared across the Trust.
- Mr Chamberlain would like to expand the CPD booklet model to include work at a senior and executive level. Apprenticeships were discussed, and how the Trust can access a levy of over £330K for training. Teaching and Leadership apprenticeships are available and fully funded. Partnerships with firms local to ALT schools will be encouraged, with an exciting opportunity with Metalcraft in Chatteris already being investigated. Mr Boddison reminded all present that apprenticeships are a good

way of accessing training for non-teaching staff. Mr Chamberlain agreed, adding that ALT offer very little for non-teaching staff.

- Governors training is an area that needs to be improved, as governors are not engaging with the current model. On-line support and CPD is being piloted, and a Chairs network will be established.
- Mr Chamberlain asked Trustees to ensure they have made themselves aware of the content of Mrs Driver's Compliance report. All present confirmed that they had and were happy to accept all the changes recommended to the Email Acceptable Policy, the Use of Images Policy, the Records Retention Policy and the Subject Access Request Policy.

Trustees noted the content Mr Chamberlain's comprehensive report and the activities across the Trust to support staff and pupils.

20. Strategic Review Update

Covered under Item 19.

21. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

SAFEGUARDING: No issues were raised regarding safeguarding.

No other urgent business was raised at this time.

22. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 13th February 2020.

Mr Dool thanked Trustees and the central team for their work during 2019 and wished everyone a very happy Christmas.