

## CENTRAL LANCASTER HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMY IMPROVEMENT BOARD

Minutes of the meeting of the Academy Improvement Board held at the school on Friday 21 January 2022 at 3:45pm.

**Present:** Mr Phil Wood (Chair)  
Mr Matt Auger  
Dr Alexis Holden  
Mr Andrew McKinnell  
Mrs Anne Rickards

Mr John Cowper (Principal)

**Also present:** Mrs Fiona Graham (Clerk)  
Ms Natasha Bilsborough (Trainee School Business Manager – observer)

**Apologies:** There were no apologies all members of the Academy Improvement Board (AIB) were present.

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and everyone joined in **ACTION** congratulating John Cowper on his appointment as Principal of the school.

### 22.01 Scheme of Delegation

Members of the AIB approved the Scheme of Delegation subject to any amendments which may follow after a review made by Professor John Crewdson, Chair of the Bay Learning Trust and Mrs Sally Kenyon Chief Executive Officer of the Bay Learning Trust.

### 22.02 Terms of Reference

The terms of reference had been reviewed and approved by the Full Committee of the Bay Learning Trust.

### 22.03 AIB Matters

a) Membership

Members of the Board would remain in post for four years or until they agreed that a local governing board should be put in place.

Paul Young had resigned since the last meeting of the AIB. John Cowper said he had a member of staff, who was also a parent, who may be interested in a parent position on the AIB. The clerk explained that enquiries had been raised with Hill Dickinson legal representatives for the Trust. They had indicated that a member of staff/parent would be able to take up the position but it was not ideal because of the wide scope on matters from which the

member of staff/parent would have to be excluded and where there may be a conflict of interest. With this in mind the suggestion from Hill Dickinson had been the AIB may wish to widen the search to see if any other parents, who were not employees could join the Board.

**John Cowper agreed** to look into finding parents who may be interested in joining the AIB. The members of the AIB agreed that a skills audit would be useful to look at the areas of expertise that needed development. **The clerk agreed** to send a Skills Audit form for Members of the AIB to complete.

**John Cowper clerk**

b) DBS/Section 128 Checks

The clerk confirmed that Warren Middleton, Exam Officer/Data Manager, had updated all DBS clearance details for the members of the AIB.

c) Declaration of Business Interests

There were no business interests in relation to the agenda items.

#### **22.04 Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 November 2021, having been circulated, were approved and signed by the chair as a correct record.

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

#### **22.05 Risk Register**

In order that Natasha Bilsborough could make a presentation and then leave the meeting, Members of the AIB agreed to alter the order of the agenda and make Risk Register and then Finance Compliance the first two items for discussion.

Board members were referred to the following documents:

- Lockdown Procedure
- Business Continuity Plan for Disaster Recovery in the event of a Critical Incident.

**All Board Members**

Board Members agreed to review these documents prior to the next spring term AIB meeting, where they would be discussed and approved subject to any amendments.

Board Members were referred to the Risk Register that had been circulated prior to the meeting. Natasha Bilsborough explained that line 25 in the document related to staff absences and work-related illness.

**A Board Member enquired** about Hill Dickinson. Natasha Bilsborough replied that Hill Dickinson were the Trust lawyers and HR advisors.

**A Board Member asked** for clarification on the document details. Natasha Bilsborough explained that the document was RAG rated, red being high risk.

Scores were made from 0-5. 5 being the maximum impact, 0 being the least impact.

**A Board Member queried** 'all HR issues being referred to Hill Dickinson with all policies adhered to accordingly'. Natasha Bilsborough said that the return to work procedures and policies were in place. HR advice and support was provided in a timely manner and followed up with HR processes in line with the Trust Absence Policy. John Cowper and Natasha Bilsborough rolled out the details to the Senior Leadership Team. The systems were much tighter, but they were not quite in place yet.

**A Board Member sought clarification** on staff workload and returning to work after suffering Covid. Natasha Bilsborough replied that every member of staff was given a return to work interview, following sickness absence. Natasha Bilsborough conducted the interviews for the support staff and John Cowper conducted the interviews for the teaching staff. On the day of the meeting there were four members of staff absent with Covid but the situation was manageable. There were some long term absences of over two years, which were being looked into.

Natasha Bilsborough explained that there were a number of financial issues that had been flagged up in audits and action plans. Some of the issues were historical and dated back to 2014, but gradually the issues were being addressed. An experienced financial assistant from the university had been employed. They had started in post two weeks ago.

**The Board Members were grateful** for the details contained in the Risk Register. **A Board Member suggested** that it may be helpful to select one of the four sections to review throughout the year and to just bring that to the meeting, drawing attention to any particular concerns.

## **22.06 Finance Compliance**

Natasha Bilsborough referred to the document, Month Ending December 2021.

- £8,000 had been received for Covid testing.
- The forecast for Pupil Premium Grant was £60,000
- Income for catering had decreased.
- Peripatetic music was costing more because more pupils were making use of the facility.
- Additional lettings were being sought through a new online booking system.
- Allowance for exclusions had been increased from three to five and this would amount to about a £25,000 reduction in the budget.
- Supply insurance did not cover teaching staff that were absent until they had been off for more than ten days.

**A Board Member queried** the reduction in income from catering. Natasha Bilsborough replied that it was a combination of reasons including costings pricing and theft. Plans for further staff training were in place and a further report would be provided.

**Natasha  
Bilsborough**

There was an overspend in supply and an allowance for increased energy costs had been made from April.

**A Board Member asked** about a solution for the catering problem. Natasha Bilsborough explained that an audit was being carried out by RPJ3 Group, Facilities and Foodservices Consultancy and Audit led by Rachel Myers. Team training had been provided by Carnforth High School Catering Manager and the Catering Manager for Ripley St Thomas Academy had provided support with menus and also suggestions on how to tackle theft.

The next item of discussion was deemed confidential and minuted as such.

**A Board Member enquired** if the catering position was different this year to other years. Natasha Bilsborough explained that it had been three and half years since the last Environmental Health Officer (EHO) visit and there had been some slippage with the standards. Catering costs had been an issue, with Covid there had been no income but there were still staff costs.

**A Board Member asked** if both the staff and produce costs had been provided. Natasha Bilsborough replied that it was just the food costs that had been provided. Staff costs were shown within the school employee costs.

**A Board Member sought clarification** on the payment of peripatetic music lessons. Natasha Bilsborough explained that the school made the full payment for Pupil Premium Grant children. Rhian Spence, Head of Music had promoted peripatetic music lessons and more pupils had taken up lessons. This meant increased costs for the school, but assurance was provided that the funding was moved across from the Pupil Premium Grant (PPG).

**A Board Member queried** the cost to parents whose children were not PPG. Natasha Bilsborough said the cost of the music lessons would be looked at and it was likely the cost would increase for parents next year. **The Board Member continued** that it may be worth allowing parents to offer what they could afford to pay as the cost of the music lessons was relatively cheap.

### **Income Expenditure Report**

In year deficit £201,615  
Deficit carried forward £100,00  
Cumulative deficit carried forward £301,615

It was planned that the in year deficit for 2022-2023 would be reduced to zero. **A Board Member enquired** if it was realistic that the in year deficit could be reduced to zero. Natasha Bilsborough replied that before Christmas a number of colleagues had left the school which would amount to a big saving in teachers' salaries. Although there were higher supply costs there were lower long term teaching costs. By the end of the month the number of pupils joining the Year Seven in September would be confirmed. Currently there were 63 pupils that had Central Lancaster High School as their first choice. Last year at this stage the number had been 61. The actual number of pupils in the current Year Seven was 120. The Lancashire Music hub had

been confirmed at the school and hopefully this would help encourage more pupils to apply to attend Central Lancaster High School. At the end of this academic year 99 pupils in Year Eleven would leave the school so more pupils had joined the school in Year Seven than were leaving in Year Eleven.

A key priority was to achieve an in year balance and then reduce the overall deficit. The exact income that would be received by the school for the academic year would be confirmed in about a month. **A Board Member asked** if the AIB would approve a budget. Natasha Bilsborough confirmed that in May an approved budget would be required for recommendation to the Trustees.

Natasha Bilsborough was thanked for her presentation. She gave her apologies and left the meeting at 4:35pm.

## **22.07 School Improvement Plan (SIP)**

### **Evidence of good progress in Teaching and Learning**

Matt Auger referred Board Members to the document entitled Evidence of good progress in Teaching and Learning, that had been circulated prior to the meeting. The biggest single factor that was inhibiting the implementation of the curriculum was behaviour.

A new conduct behaviour policy had been introduced and the details were included in the document. Key behaviour expectations had been shared with staff and with pupils. These were consistently reinforced and the impact of these expectations was encouraging. Phil Walmsley, an HMI inspector supporting the school had done three walk throughs of the school and had found the behaviour good. Matt Auger continued that behaviour could always be better and it was important to keep embedding expectations so that they were part of the culture. The tough part was maintaining the behaviour expectations and ensuring that the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) were clear on exactly what was required.

**A Board Member asked** about Parental Voice. John Cowper replied that the Parental Voice had been sought at the end of the last academic year but to date a follow up had not been done. John Cowper agreed that it would be useful to consult the Parental Voice again and analyse the response on behaviour in school.

**John  
Cowper**

Mark Williams, Behaviour Reviewer supporting the school had said the behaviour was much better and the start of the culture of compliance had been made but the adults in school must maintain the culture and ensure non-negotiables were kept in place to avoid old habits returning. Matt Auger said the majority of pupils were behaving well it was just a small minority who still had a few issues to resolve.

**A Board Member enquired** about lesson observations. Matt Auger replied that the whole culture had changed. Previously the feedback had been that colleagues felt spied on and not trusted, now it was commonplace that colleagues walked around offering peer observations and support. SLT had

good practice of support and offering areas for development. SLT on call would visit every lesson, these were supportive visits and their presence was appreciated. SLT would check on non-negotiables and if the behaviour policy routines were being used.

Laura Morris, SENDco had made positive steps with parents and children with Educational Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). Parents were now much more receptive to the EHCP process and were more positive about their comments being listened to and taken into account. The next SEND reviews would take place next half term, weekly drop-in sessions had been established and the feedback was good.

**Board Members agreed** that a questionnaire for parents would be useful and would demonstrate school support for pupils, parents and the wider community. **A Board Member expressed** their gratitude as a parent for the excellent supportive newsletter that was distributed every week. John Cowper was grateful for this feedback.

### **Lesson Observations; Numerical data and progress linked to CPD**

This academic year observations had been scheduled, lessons and classes identified by SLT and five working days' notice, plus a weekend given to the class teacher. Feedback had been provided within 48 hours of the observation. Out of 33 teachers, there were plans for three identified members of the teaching staff to receive 1:1 coaching.

Action steps for all teachers were based on action steps taken from Doug Lemov's Teach like a Champion. The chart shared with Board Members was colour coded red not met, yellow working towards and green secure. The greyed out columns were staff who were on maternity leave, long term absence and one who had left. The horizontal analysis was the progress of individual teachers.

**A Board Member enquired** about teachers who had not achieved good scores. John Cowper explained that there were lots of developments implemented this year and the appraisal system was now in line with the legal requirement. Objective, support, observation, book scrutiny and pupil voice were all taken into consideration. Where a target was not being met the teacher would be given support to meet that target. A mid year review would take place by the end of February and a clear RAG rate towards a target. A cycle of support would take place and then if the targets were not met formal capabilities would be introduced.

In terms of performance management was it staff at UPS3 that were scoring red was **asked by a Board Member**. John Cowper replied that this was common in a lot of schools, the red not being met, fed into weak areas.

The Continued Professional Development (CPD) each half term had a focus, with expectations in place, clear transparency and was flexible to link to the needs of the classroom.

**A Board Member enquired** how the observations and CPD were received by the teachers. Matt Auger replied that the body language was strong and had encouraged a culture of discussion amongst colleagues, consistencies and a positive engagement. The Unions had been positive to the changes too. Jo Lilley, Assistant Principal ran a staff wellbeing council and the feedback had been good. Staff liked that they were told what was going to happen and then it did, this built confidence and trust. The main concern was the baseline and the need to improve the quality of teaching.

### **Behaviour and Attendance Summary Report**

The number of exclusions had increased and this number was likely to rise but it was a necessary action at this stage. 85% of all exclusions were for persistent or general disruptive behaviour. There were eight pupils who had had five or more exclusions and represented 1.37% of the whole school population.

**A Board Member asked** about the Year Nine cohort. John Cowper replied that this cohort had 16 fixed term exclusions. They were the year group with the most disjointed education due to Covid.

**A Board Member enquired** about the eight pupils. John Cowper explained that there were case studies being kept on about 13 pupils. Victoria Crossman, Assistant Principal had a central point of records of all support provided for pupils. The pupils' needs were forensically analysed to target strategic intervention.

Five permanent exclusions had been budgeted for during the academic year. Attendance was in line with national figures. The Persistent Absence (PA) rate stood at 12%. Lots of work had been done on absences through home visits and support from external agencies. Lates had improved although the Marsh bus no longer ran and this had contributed to some lates. Focussed work was being done with PAs and disadvantaged pupils' absences.

The next item of discussion was deemed confidential and minuted as such.

### **Quality of Education Summary**

The work on the design of the curriculum in each subject was started but then stopped at the end of March 2020 with the first lockdown due to the national pandemic. No further development was carried out by senior leaders until the start of this academic year.

Matt Auger shared details of what had taken place since September 2021 onwards.

The curriculum planning for maths, science and English were strong and had been externally quality assured by the School Improvement Partner. The majority of schemes of learning were in place for core and EBAC subjects.

The next item of discussion was deemed confidential and minuted as such.

## **Homework (home learning) Standards and Expectations**

Board Members were referred to the document entitled Homework proposals for CLHS – January 2022.

**A Board Member asked** for a timescale for the homework proposals. Matt Auger replied that the homework standards and expectations were in place. Mock revision was underway for Year Eleven pupils. After school sessions were in place for science and English. 25 pupils were attending the science sessions and 21 pupils were attending the English sessions. The sessions had been well received and pupils had wanted to attend. Year Eleven pupils had weekly homework expectations.

**A Board Member enquired** about homework for Key Stage Three pupils. Matt Auger replied that the 30-45 minutes to complete work mentioned in the document was per subject. A timetable of homework set and when it was due in was provided. Diary planners were provided for pupils and details were provided on ClassCharts. **A Board Member asked** that there was a clarity of language and how homework was listed on ClassCharts.

**A Board Member queried** about the homework implementation. Matt Auger responded that the homework proposals would be in place after February half term, a letter would be sent to parents and the weekly Newsletter would provide additional information.

**A Board Member asked** if there was support in place for pupils who found it difficult to complete homework. Matt Auger gave assurances that support was in place through a SEND homework club and an area of the library available for doing homework. The school would work with the parents to facilitate a positive homework experience for the pupils.

## **Continuity of Curriculum and Impact of Covid**

Board Members were grateful to receive the document on the continuity of the curriculum and the impact of Covid. **A Board Member sought clarification** that gaps in learning, due to the lockdowns, had been addressed. John Cowper confirmed that overall the gaps had been addressed and the changes to the culture across the whole school had supported a purposeful learning environment through the introduction of new policies, systems and non-negotiable classroom routines.

## **22.08 School Term and Holiday Dates 2022-2023**

Members of the Board approved the proposed school term and holiday pattern dates for 2022-2023 and approved the five INSET dates for 2022-2023.

The INSET dates were as follows:

- Friday 2 September 2022
- Friday 7 October 2022
- Monday 31 October 2022

- Tuesday 1 November 2022
- Tuesday 3 January 2023

## **22.09 Unavoidable School Closures**

The Principal confirmed there had been no unavoidable school closures since the last meeting.

## **22.10 Educational Visits**

The Board Members received details of recent visits in relation to the impact and benefits for pupils. Educational visits included:

Type A visits

- Two evening theatre trips organised by Rhian Spence, Head of Music
- Two animation workshops at Lancaster and Morecambe College organised by Rhian Spence

The Principal reported details of the following proposed educational visits which were considered and approved;

Type A visits

- Music Technology workshop at Lancaster and Morecambe College on 25 January 2022

Type B visit

- Year Seven, year group visit to Chill Factor on 4 July 2022
- Year Eight, year group visit to Chill Factor on 5 July 2022

## **22.11 Self Evaluation Summer (SES)**

A draft format of the Summary Self-Evaluation for Central Lancaster High School was shared with the Board Members. This had been compiled with the assistance of Mark Williams and with external scrutiny in mind.

The document included the following details:

- Overall effectiveness: Good
- Previous Inspection 21 June 2017
- Quality of Education: Good
- Behaviour and Attitudes: Good
- Personal Development: Good
- Leadership and Management: Good

**A Board Member asked** if there was evidence behind the summary. John Cowper confirmed that there was evidence to back the findings and there were next step priorities from now until Easter.

## **22.12 Update from Anne Rickards on Virtual Schools enquiry**

Anne Rickards apologised but she had no updates to provide at this stage.

**22.13 AIB Training**

The clerk agreed to circulate details of external training that was available. **clerk**

**22.14 Any Other Business**

There was no further business.

**22.15 Confidentiality**

The committee confirmed that all matters discussed at the AIB meetings were confidential.

It was agreed that parts of item number 22.06 and 22.07 were deemed to be of a confidential nature and were minuted as such.

**22.16 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The pattern of proposed dates and times for future meetings had been circulated prior to the meeting. It was agreed that all Board Members would email the clerk with their available dates and a suitable pattern of future meetings would be compiled. **All Board Members Clerk**

The chair thanked everyone for their attendance and input and closed the meeting at 6:00pm.

**CENTRAL LANCASTER HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMY IMPROVEMENT BOARD**

**CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

Minutes of the meeting of the Academy Improvement Board held at the school on Friday 21 January 2022 at 3:45pm.

<b>22.06</b>	Finance Compliance	
	Kirsty Gray, the catering manager was new in post in September 2021. An Environmental Health Officer (EHO) food hygiene inspection had been carried out and the grade had been reduced from five to two. There had been two weeks to address the food hygiene issues. The catering manager considered that the grade should now be back up to five. However, Rachel Myers, (RPJ3 Group) had said that the grade would be four. The flooring was in need of replacement due to general wear and tear but also a deep clean was required. The probation period for the catering manager had been extended by three months and it was possible that she was not quite the right person for the position.	
<b>22.07</b>	<b>School Improvement Plan (SIP)</b>	
	<b>Behaviour and Attendance Summary Report</b>	
	<b>A Board Member enquired</b> if the school had sufficient resources to address PAs and disadvantaged pupils' absences. John Cowper explained that the pastoral team had been restructured. The revolving door of fixed term exclusions needed time. SLT were picking up details on call and the paperwork was being updated accordingly. It was a challenge but the attendance officer was excellent.	
	The staff structure costings were being looked at on 25 January. All Heads of Year had Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (TLRs) worth £8,000 and these were protected for three years. The Heads of Year were stretched already	
	Fixed term exclusions had increased, but the vast majority of pupils applauded the improved behaviour. The increase in fixed term exclusions would tip the other way but consistency and fairness were key objectives. An Ofsted inspection would pick out the number of fixed term exclusions, but this was expected and it would be possible to justify the reason for the increase	
	<b>Quality of Education Summary</b>	

**ACTION**

	Schemes of learning were weak in geography and MFL. Staff had undergone training and schemes of learning had been secured from another school with distinct and clear action points.	
	<b>A Board Member enquired</b> about the timescale to address weak areas. John Cowper responded that the timescale was immediate. Phil Walmsley was working with the subject leader in geography to secure the scheme of learning. The Head of Department was being given informal support to ensure that their professional practice was more up to date.	
	The school had been two to three years behind the new inspection process, but this was being addressed with quality assurance of the curriculum to take place in half term 3. Phil Walmsley would review in depth the curriculum intent, implementation and outcomes within each subject area.	
	In science and English specific action points had been addressed and now there was quality assurance that the schemes of learning were fit for purpose.	