



An Active Learning Trust Academy

Neale-Wade Academy
Minutes for Local Governing Board Meeting
 Wednesday 7th December 2022 at 5pm

<u>Item No</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Actions</u>
1	<p><u>Welcome / Apologies</u></p> <p>Lucetta Crosskill (LC) Graham Horn (GH) Jim Rowland (JR) Claire Howlett (CH) Mel Henman (MH) Anna Betts (AB) Katherine Nightingale (KN) Gill Thomas (GT)</p> <p>Teams – Lucy Calow (LCA) Adam Daw (AD)</p> <p>Apologies - Nick Morley (NM)</p> <p>Minutes – Louise Dearlove (LD)</p>	
2	<p><u>Declaration of Business / Pecuniary Interests & Conflicts of Interest</u></p> <p>KN is now providing paid work at the Neale Wade Academy with the SEN Department.</p>	
3	<p><u>Chair's Action</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	
4	<p><u>Membership of the Governing Board</u></p> <p><u>LCA and AD attended the meeting via Teams</u></p> <p>LCA introduced herself and said she currently works with Unity Schools Partnership and her expertise is in SEND. LCA explained that she has previously worked with Ofsted within the secondary sector.</p> <p>AD introduced himself and explained that he works at a specialist school, Highfield Ely which is part of the ALT. AD explained that they have 134 students between the ages of 3 and 23 with a range of special needs. GH talked about the combined teaching and Learning and Special Needs review on the 31st January and the 1st February which is open for Governors to attend if they can make it or even virtually for some parts.</p> <p>LCA left the meeting</p>	



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5	<p><u>Minutes of the Last Meeting</u></p> <p>All happy that the minutes were true and correct.</p>	
6	<p><u>Principal's Report</u></p> <p><u>Graham presented the SEF to the board and inquired as to whether a Principals Report, which is a condensed version of the SEF, would suffice now that they had seen it previously. The board might find this useful. Is this knowledge sufficient?</u></p> <p>AB explained that she would like to see the new additions to the SEF/ Principals Report highlighted so she can see what has changed.</p> <p>LC said yes, she finds it adequate.</p> <p>AB highlighted what looked like a mistake in a column of figures which GH said he would look at after the meeting. Ab would also like the pages numbered for ease.</p> <p>AB asked in the outcomes of students, the lower attainers performed better than the middle attainers and the high attainers were the worst performing group. Ab asked if GH could explain this.</p> <p>GH said that this trend isn't new. GH said he has asked the Quality of Education Team to look at what a high attainer strategy would be and to underpin it. Engagement in lessons is sometimes aimed at the masses, specialists in post and staff expectation play a part, including behaviour in lesson.</p> <p>JRO explained an HPA student should have an average scale score of 110 in reading and maths. Our HPA students are around 111 for reading and 110 for Maths so they are only just in and have a bigger journey to travel as a HPA student.</p> <p>AB asked if the area they live in plays a part in that?</p> <p>JRO answered it's about those students knowing what they can achieve as when talking to some students they don't know what their potential could be. JRO thinks there is a lot of work needed to raise the profile of HPA.</p> <p>AB asked about the Humanities results in the SEF. She said the report explained that members of staff had left the Academy.</p>	<p>tracking changes</p> <p>Work with the transition team to establish better links with primary schools in the area.</p>



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GHO there is a head of Humanities but none for Geography or RE. GH said that they are looking to recruit in January but unfortunately historically History hasn't done well with results

JRO said they are looking at which students take the course and why they are taking the course, especially if it is because they have a teacher that they like but don't necessarily have the skills to do well at the course. One of the areas we underperform in is nonfiction and that is what History essentially is. GH said that Geography met targets this year and looks better again for next year. Re needs to be built up due to maternity.

GH reintroduced Claire Howlett who he said since he has been in post has had a focus on reading initially and more recently Claire has looked particularly at KS3. He said Mel Henman looks at KS4 in assessment and reporting. Jim Rowland who is Head of School and leads the Quality of Education Team.

MH explained she started in 1999 as an NQT and loves teaching here. MH said that GH is the 5th Principal she has worked with and felt that this year the time was right for her to step into the role of SLT. MH explained that all ALT secondary schools work under the guidance of Helen Cassidy and have a guiding set of principles. She explained that the first principle is knowing your students and gathering information on learner's experience on entry. She feels that the pandemic has hindered this due to lack of primary assessments. There are assessments taking place around cognitive learning at entry, reading and progress testing. The second principle is to ensure students are progressing well throughout the curriculum using regular assessment opportunities. MH also explained the KS3 progress tests for Maths English and science which are taken at the end of years 7, 8 and 9. MH explained that the Quality of Education Committee introduced the 6 pillars of teaching, where assessment is one of them. This is about students being able to get live feedback as well as teachers being able to adapt the lessons and look at areas of the curriculum they need to strengthen.

AB asked MH if there were areas she would like to know more about when students transition from year 6 to 7?

MH answered that it would be great to get out again to the primary schools to form a two-way street for information. GH said he will speak to Mrs Pentland and Kirsty Gallagher to look at transition around vocabulary, expectations and areas from an academic view but also from a pastoral view. GH went on to say that there are currently 45 students being assessed for an EHCP and minimal Educational Psychology hours meaning some students will not be assessed. GH said that the school acknowledge that those students have needs and hopefully along the line we can all work together to 'Assess Plan Do Review'



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with primary schools to ensure that the EHCP is already started rather than applying in year 7. Unfortunately, the system asks for students to fail before the assessment can start. GH spoke about the statistics in Cambridgeshire and explained that ultimately there are not enough specialist placements for students who need it. AD reiterated this and said there are absolutely not enough specialist places. He said they have a huge number of students who have had to go through the cycle of having to fail over and over before they get a place and they are then at a point where behaviour is so severe that they have to then try and unpick it all. He said the system is a mess and how we are all going to navigate through that is going to be interesting. GH said this is exactly why we all need to work together especially when it comes to supporting and protecting a child into adult life.

Mel then spoke about assessments and said one of the important things is to make sure teachers are using a wide range of strategies. Periodically checking improvement, blending current and previous learning, looking at data and progress in fine detail, having regular line management, ensuring accuracy of judgement and using external moderation.

LC asked at what point do parents find out during their GCSE journey where they are?

MH explained that it used to be at the end of year 10 but this year she has moved it to April.

LC asked if students are informed?

MH said the results are for staff at the moment but after the first mock exams the information will be shared with students.

KN asked what parental communication is like on SIMs as information previously was available on GO. As a parent she found GO a really important tool for information.

GH explained the ways we communicate in school using newsletters and feeding back assessments. He said having GO sit on top of SIMs masked some of the errors in recording which was only exposed once GO was removed.

AB asked if Sims is being used to record assessments?

GH said yes, it is being rolled out this year dependent on the year group. AB said the information year 8s received recently was great and especially enjoyed the face-to-face parents evening.



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MH said that she felt those questions led on nicely to the next part of her presentation which includes reporting and feeding back to parents. Mel said that she has worked hard alongside CH to send out information reports to parents and detailed some of those reports that have been sent out. She said the plan is to get those reporting procedures in place and working and they will then be rolled across all year groups.

AB asked if the extra reporting affects teacher workload?

MH said they are working hard to streamline the key fundamentals which will reduce workload. MH said the dream is to enable admin staff to generate reports to send to parents. GH said it is a statutory requirement to publish reports for parents. MH said reports are generated on a spreadsheet and staff can see gaps in knowledge, so it serves as a good gap analysis tool.

AB asked how results are pitched to students and how do they feel? Attitudes etc?

MH said they don't always know that they are being tested. But it is fair to say that it provokes different responses, some feel daunted, some who are excited – a full spectrum.

AB asked can teachers tell when a student struggles in a test but has the knowledge?

MH said that they put support in place throughout the exam experience. Staff provide a journey and develop their experience early on in school to prepare them for years 10 and 11.

MH explained the GL Assessments and explained that a huge amount of data comes back from these tests. She said staff need to assess that data and see how they can learn from it. The ALT are working on a data dashboard to enable us to see the data clearer. MH explained that there are comparisons between our students and national benchmarks letting us see where our cohort fits into these figures. The data is then broken down into various categories. MH can then ask staff to produce action plans to enable teachers to tailor their lessons.

KN said she read you have to have a reading age of 16 to do a maths GCSE paper. KN asked if this takes in to account the reading ages of these students?

GT said readers can be used in exams.



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CH then spoke about reading and Covid Catch Up Funding. CH said they have employed members of staff to bridge the gaps in learning based on the GL Assessment. CH said she picked up reading and felt that the school had a poor culture when it came to reading. CH said she started with regular testing and tested every student in school. In doing this it showed that only 38% of students were at their expected age range for reading. Accessing the curriculum becomes a huge issue if you cannot read especially in text-based subjects. Strategies were put in place and used as a golden thread and the three areas we looked at were intervention, curriculum and the culture of reading. She said as an English teacher you are not taught how to teach a child to read and this creates a huge gap if they come up from primary school unable to read. CH discovered a programme called 'thinking reading' specifically designed for secondary school student. This programme was specifically designed to plug the gaps with diagnostic testing and where the issues are. Three members of staff have been trained how to deliver the course and are now delivering the programme to students. CH showed a slide showing a table of students who have been through the course and how the programme has improved.

KN asked CH where she found the average reading ability was at?

CH answered that on average students were 1.5 years lower than they should be across the board. CH said that progress was mixed. The greatest progress was 6.5 years over 38 sessions which was excellent.

AB asked about the lessons they miss when being taken out of lesson?

CH explained that it is random, the programme states that it does not matter which lessons you take them out of during the course as reading is fundamentally more important. CH explained that the data shown was the trial period of the previous year 11 cohort. This year initially reading tests have been completed for years 7,8 and 9 and those with a reading score of 2.5 years below expected age will have a 1:1 test to show exactly where they are. She said, normally this more in-depth test indicated that the reading age is higher than indicated on the initial test. CH explained that there are two layers to reading, one being decoding and the other being comprehension. CH said the second part of the intervention is corrective reading. There are 2 groups in year 7 and 2 groups in year 8 currently. CH said the course is very prescriptive and teacher led. CH said she is incredibly pleased with the intervention and how it is growing.

KN asked if primary schools test reading ages in year 6 and if those reading ages are passed on to secondary schools on entry?



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CH explained that yes, they do but we test again due to the 6-week holidays having a potential impact. GH also said there are huge variations in primary education reporting the information to us.

They also looked at reading more in school and students reading every lesson every day for around 7 minutes. CH has been trying to make sure this is happening by selling the idea of how important reading is, provide staff training to support this and nominate a reading champion in each faculty area to oversee the rollout. For those staff there was an extra layer of training to equip them with the knowledge to check and promote the extra reading. The Champions put together an implementation plan for their faculty area and then share it with the other teachers in their faculty area.

GH asked how reading was received in faculty areas?

CH said very well, Teachers agree it is important, but Teachers are not confident in how they can incorporate it into the lesson. CH said it is just a training issue and giving support. CH said that Tony Lawson who is an experienced English Teacher is supporting staff with tutor time reading where they read 3 books a year from a selection of books CH had picked prior. CH explained that all these books have a pastoral focus incorporating areas like homelessness, bereavement etc. The idea of this is to read for pleasure and this is going well.

KN asked what they are reading in lesson to get their 7 minutes of reading per lesson in?

MH explained that it has been stressed to teachers that the reading material should be worked into their lesson and often the student is unaware that it is happening. MH explained that in Maths they have focussed on vocabulary and that every classroom has a vocabulary board on the wall.

KN asked if teachers are aware of those students who struggles with reading within their lessons?

CH said that a teacher must ensure that if a child is asked to read a text, they should be able to read it confidently and at least can read 95% of the text. This related to the golden thread of knowing your student and pre teaching. CH said a lot of work has been done to enable reading and to encourage reading for pleasure. The library was not being used well so the library was moved to hubs within faculty areas to make them more accessible. Books were ordered and are now part of the uniform check to have a book and have it with them every day. Book club runs on a Friday morning which students enjoy having a chance to speak with other students about books.



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	<p>KN asked if staff are encouraged to read and communicate with students about the books they read?</p> <p>CH said yes especially in tutor time where conversations are opened. Words are also identified across the curriculum to identify which words students need to practice. These are also incorporated into the student passports.</p> <p>KN asked if the schools have a relationship with the County Council Library?</p> <p>CH answered that there was not a relationship. She said that they are starting from scratch and will investigate what the library has to offer.</p>	
7	<p><u>Safeguarding</u></p> <p>GH said there were 206 concerns logged last month which exceeds the logs made throughout the year of 2018. The fundamental areas of concern were around mental health, self-harm and low mood. Sexual behaviours are a focus and the team are currently training an IT member of staff to run filter checks in school. Billy Griffiths has taken on PEPs which has been highly successful as he has a lot of empathy and experience. Work is taking place on e-safety and how we keep staff up to date on areas of concern. This is also feeds into the curriculum and life skills. Staff are recognising concerns and reporting them well. We have mental health first aiders for staff and students and staff are trained on sign posting and logging.</p> <p>KN asked about peer-on-peer support as students want to help others. She said the Student Leadership Team want to learn about mental health and ways in which they can help other students. KN mentioned having animals in school.</p> <p>GH mentioned that we do have a dog come into school which has been successful.</p> <p>GT asked if the school use My Concern?</p> <p>GH answered yes, the Trust review it every term. He said that they look at it regularly and make sure that the loop has been completed, not only the compliant areas like reporting and follow ups but also the pastoral after care. GH said he isn't always sure that this loop is completed.</p> <p>LC said she is going to meet with NM fortnightly to look at Safeguarding.</p>	



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	<p>KN asked if statistics are kept on bullying?</p> <p>GH said yes, statistics can be broken down and compared year on year. The recording is now reported on My Concern as part of Safeguarding.</p>	
8	<p><u>Focus on Assessment and use of Covid Catch – Up Funding</u></p>	
9	<p><u>Policies</u></p> <p>LC asked if anyone had any questions on Policies?</p> <p>No questions asked.</p> <p>All Policies were ratified by the Governors.</p>	
10	<p><u>Governor Monitoring, Development and Training</u></p> <p>GH asked if Governors could decide who is responsible for each area before the next meeting. Look at areas such as Send, Teaching and Learning, Safeguarding etc.</p> <p>Minutes going forward are going to focus on questions and challenges.</p>	<p>Look at schemes of delegation</p>
11	<p><u>Trust Update</u></p> <p>GH asked for decisions to be made on Governor roles and responsibilities before the next meeting. A schedule can then be organised.</p> <p>KN mentioned that visits can tie in with the improvement plan GH said that it was discussed at the ALT Conference recently that Governors could look at their own improvement plan.</p> <p>GH also mentioned training regarding Ofsted and look at the Trust to offer training on what questions to ask and expect.</p> <p>GT asked when the school are expecting Ofsted?</p> <p>GH said any time really.</p> <p>GH explained the Teaching and Learning and SEND review on 31st Jan and 1st Feb. Day 1 will focus on SEND in the morning with Simon Bainbridge and Kelly Wilshire, talking to students, Teaching Assistants and look at areas where we have identified good adaptive teaching. The second part of the day will look at</p>	<p>Governor roles and responsibilities</p>



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	<p>Rapid Improvement areas, looking at what they saw last time and looking at the improvements made. Day 2 will focus on the experience of a student at the Academy. Staff will track a student with an SEN need and track their experience.</p> <p>KN expressed her concern that teachers are not asking students their pronouns and only know when a student tells them. She said Kite are interested in coming into Neale Wade Academy. GH said it was something to look at.</p> <p>GH wants to have a conversation at another time about how our Governing body works and if we should have external experts come into ask questions. GH said we will be welcoming a new CEO early next year.</p>	
12	<p><u>Risks Update</u></p> <p>Centralised data base but risks have not changed recently although we now have the issue of Strep A. GH explained the guidance given which there is not really any other than hygiene. Staff absence is high this week</p>	
13	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>AB had a concern from a parent regarding her child being moved from top set Science to bottom set Science. Parents concern was that no one informed her. GH said he would investigate that.</p>	
14	<p><u>Dates of Future Meetings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wed 8th February 2023 • Wed 12th April 2023 • Wed 5th July 2023 	