

PART ONE MINUTES - Meeting of the Trust Board of The Learning Partnership

Held on Thursday 18th July 2024 at 1:10 pm

Venue – Congleton High School, Box Lane CW12 4NS

Trustees present:

Mr David Wootton (DW)
Mr Bob Armstrong (BA)
Mr John Clough (JC)
Mr Robin McCluney (RMc)
Mrs Helen Ranson (HR)
Mrs Alison Greatbanks (AG)
Mr Andrew Pear (AP)
Mr Simon Kidwell (SK)
Dr Martin Ashcroft (MA)

Apologies:

Dame Kathy August (KA)

In attendance

Mr Dan Thomas (DTh)- CEO
Mr David Twambley (DTw) -DCEO Operations
Ms Kate Baddeley (KB)-DCEO Education
Dr Allan Howells (AH)-Director of Quality
Mrs Sue Pomeroy (SP)- Clerk
Mrs Janet Myers (JM)- NGA-observing

Congleton High School Representatives-left after item 1

Ms Heidi Thurland (HT)-Headteacher
Mr Rich Benson (RB)-Chair of Governors
Head Boy at Congleton High School
Head Girl at Congleton High School

Agenda Item	Action
<p>1. Presentation from Headteacher at Congleton High School</p> <p>HT Introduced the Chair of Governors of the LGB (RB) and the Head girl and Head Boy who had recently been appointed. She shared photographs of highlights and achievements from the past year and announced that the school had recently achieved the Gatsby Benchmark award for its excellent work on careers guidance.</p> <p>RB then spoke and informed trustees that he is in a position of both governor and member of the community as his granddaughter attends the school. The aim of the school is to provide an outstanding experience for its students. HT had taken up her appointment in September 2023 and had had a successful first year. He noted that, with the support of the Trust, the school is in a strong position.</p> <p>The Head Girl and Boy then addressed Trustees. Both stated that they had joined in Year 7 and felt happy, safe and well-supported in school. They talked about the new House system which HT had introduced this year and how this had helped to bring students together and develop the sense of community. They were excited about their new roles and being given the opportunity to develop and lead on projects such as a reading mentor programme for Year 7 and 8 students.</p>	

<p>HT then informed Trustees that the focus areas this year had been on strengthening the senior leadership team and on addressing legacy issues around SEND. The building blocks are now in place to enable the school to progress over the next 3-5 years with an ambitious but carefully planned approach in place. She thanked the Trust for the support she had received over the past year.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the school representatives for their input. He noted that it is a difficult task to lead transition in a school which is already rated as good. He asked HT how the Trust Board could help the school on its improvement journey. HT responded that she would welcome the expertise of Trustees to work together to explore how ambitious the school could be.</p> <p>2. Welcome and apologies</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone and confirmed that the meeting was quorate. Apologies were received and accepted from Dame Kathy August.</p> <p>3. Declarations and confirmations</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest made concerning the items on the agenda.</p> <p>4. Governance Matters</p> <p>External Review of Governance</p> <p>JC explained that the Governance Committee had met earlier in the day and that Janet Myers (JM-NGA consultant) had attended the meeting to present the initial findings from the External Review of Governance.</p> <p>JM informed Trustees that the full report would shortly be available. She highlighted the main points from the review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Trust believes in the power of governance and is willing to invest time and resources into maximising its effectiveness. • The Trust board is strong. • Governance structures are well-organised. • Documents and reports are of a high standard. • There are good relationships between executives, Trustees and LGBs. <p>Future areas of focus are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment at LGB level and succession planning at trust board level • Policy management • Communication of governance to stakeholders • LGB monitoring visits • Induction and training for trustees • Additions to the scheme of delegation <p>5. Minutes</p> <p>a. Trustees reviewed the part 1 minutes from the previous meeting held on 20th March 2024. Resolved: Trustees approved the part 1 minutes as a correct record of the meeting.</p> <p>b. Trustees reviewed the part 2 minutes from the previous meeting held on 20th March 2024. Resolved: Trustees approved the part 2 minutes as a correct record of the meeting.</p> <p>c. Matters arising</p> <p>The Chair reviewed the action log, and the following matter arising was discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Novus IT contract-DTw confirmed that he had worked with RM to review the Novus contract and that all the schools would be onboarded by September 2024. 	
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<p>It was confirmed that all other actions, if not addressed on this agenda, had been met and closed as appropriate.</p>	
<p>6. Chair's report Summary of actions taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of the proposal to reduce the PAN at UTC from 200 to 125. Consultation had taken place and the business case had been submitted. • Approval of the proposal to lower the age range at Daven Primary School from 4-11 to 2-11. The consultation received had all been positive and the business case had been submitted. • Approval of the proposal to open a unit for pupils with SEND at Leighton Academy in partnership with the Local Authority. LA support has been secured and the funding agreement submitted to the Regional Director's office. The provision would not open until approval was granted from the RD's office. • Approval of changes in titles of executives' positions. This is to aid clarity in understanding of their roles and is not linked to pay. Two Deputy CEO positions have been created-DCEO (Operations) held by David Twambley and DCEO (Education) held by Kate Baddeley. It was confirmed that the DCEO (Operations) would cover for the CEO if required as a key aspect of the CEO role is as Accounting Officer. An Executive and Central leads organogram (Paper 6 SUPP) was available on Governor Hub. <p>Trustees noted and endorsed the Chair's actions taken since the last meeting of the Trust Board held on 20th March 2024.</p> <p>7. Reports from Committees</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Chair's report-Former TLFLP FAR 15.05.24. b. Chair's report-Finance and Staffing 20.05.24. c. Member's summer briefing 13.06.24-verbal d. Chair's report Audit and Risk 03.07.24 e. Chair's Report-Education, Standards and Performance 17.07.24-verbal f. Chair's Report-Finance and Staffing 17.07.24. g. Chair's Report -Governance 18.07.24-verbal <p>Trustees noted the reports and approved the recommendation from the Governance committee that Trust Articles of Association should be updated in line with the latest DfE "model 3" Articles (for mainstream academies with one or more UTC).</p> <p>Resolved: The Trust Board recommended that Members consider a Special Resolution to update the Trust Articles of Association.</p> <p>Trustees raised the following questions from the Chair's reports:</p> <p>Q. The Trust is facing some financial stresses in the short term. Can these be controlled to lead to mid-term stability?</p> <p>R. Yes, the Trust has set a budget with a small deficit in 2024-25 but will return to a surplus position in 2025-26 with reserves reaching the 5% target level.</p> <p>Q. What assumptions have been made in the budget figures regarding pay awards?</p> <p>R. 1.75% unfunded has been assumed. Some Trusts have assumed that the teacher pay award would be fully funded whilst others have assumed 3-5% unfunded. The JNC offer for support staff has been factored in.</p> <p>Q. Can Trustees be confident that the required improvements will be realised to ensure that the budget does return to a surplus position? There are a significant number of red areas currently on the budget projection.</p>	

<p>R. The Trust has already worked pro-actively to address the “red” areas, for example by carrying out re-structuring exercises in some schools and would take further action if required. The Finance and Staffing Committee scrutinised the budget projections and were satisfied with the level of prudence in the budget and reassured that further action would be taken if required.</p>	
<p>8. STRATEGIC MATTERS</p> <p>a. Vision, Values and Trust Priorities 2024-25</p> <p>DTh spoke to Paper 8a “Vision and Values and Shaping our Priorities for 2024-25. He provided a review of Year One, stating that the Trust had ended the year in a strong position. Headteachers and central team leads had been consulted regarding the future needs of the organisation. The key themes identified were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved communications and stronger links between schools • Greater educational expertise to support school improvement. • More Central direction in certain areas <p>The key drivers for Year One were People. Passion and Performance. Paper 8a.1 provides an overview of progress against these key drivers. It is proposed to refine the core purpose in Year 2 to “Transforming Communities Through Education.” The proposals are currently in draft form and would be finalised in the autumn term 2024.</p> <p>Trustees commented that a definition of the deliverables needs to be available soon to enable progress to be measured. DTh responded that a 3-year programme would be finalised early in the autumn term.</p> <p>Q. Paper 8a refers to a “Trust Premium”. What would this look like?</p> <p>R. It refers to the benefits for all stakeholders from being part of the Trust. It would be organised under the key drivers of People, Passion and Performance. Strategic Partnerships would be developed, for example with Chester Zoo and with the High Sheriff’s reading project which have clearly identified deliverables, and which benefit all the schools within the Trust.</p> <p>Trustees noted that the Trust needs to demonstrate clarity in its purpose and be able to demonstrate how it has added value for its pupils.</p> <p>b. Update on Education Executive</p> <p>KB spoke to Paper 8b “Education and Strategic Operation Update”. She outlined the background and context to the report and her initial reflections on the TLP culture. She then highlighted the strategic direction for Year Two and the notion of the “TLP Way.” She explained that the TLP Way Involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A principles-based framework of education. • Aligned approaches which are co-constructed through consultation with the schools, to facilitate purposeful collaboration to improve the quality of education for all. • A shift in strategy from responsive and reactive in Year One, to being more proactive and strategic in Year Two. <p>c. Update from Operations Executive</p> <p>DTw spoke to Paper 8c “Executive Operations Update” July 2024. He provided a review of Year One and outlined priorities for Year Two:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority 1-Establishing a culture of Operational Excellence • Priority 2-Improving Trust Communication • Priority 3 – Operating Sustainably 	

9. Operational Matters

a. Review and approval of budget 2024-25

Trustees noted that the budget and 3-year forecast had been reviewed in depth by the Finance and Staffing Committee who had recommended it to the Trust Board for approval. Trustees had also asked questions during agenda item 7.

Resolved: Trustees approved the budget for 2024-25.

b. Review of 3-year budget forecast

Trustees noted the uncertainty around future funding for schools given the recent change in government.

Resolved: Trustees approved the 3-year budget forecast.

c. School Improvement-Daven, SWS

KB provided an update:

Daven

- Positive picture with good progress against all the Ofsted AFIs.
- The headteacher is taking maternity leave from September 2024 and a strong interim Headteacher has been recruited to cover the maternity leave. There will be a handover period.

Q. Is the expectation that the school would be judged as “good” at the next full Ofsted inspection?

R. Yes.

d. Risk Register

Paper 9d provided an overview of the Risk Register since the last Trust Board meeting in March 2024. This and the full Risk Register had been reviewed at the Audit and Risk Committee on 03.07.24.

e. Health and Safety Update

Paper 9e provided a general update and details of RIDDOR incidents. Egerton Primary had recorded the highest number of incidents. DTw confirmed that these had been reviewed and were unrelated.

f. Mental Health and Well-being

The Chair informed Trustees that he had met with Helen Ranson (HR) to discuss the Trust’s approach to mental health and well-being. HR explained that she is a [coach and](#) mental health facilitator with over 20 years’ experience of working with a range of emotional issues. She spoke to Trustees on the importance of well-being, especially following the Covid-19 pandemic which has changed society in many significant ways. She stressed that well-being should be at the forefront of all policies and decisions made and that there is the potential for the Trust to become a centre of excellence in this field.

g. Link Trustee Roles

Trustee link roles were confirmed as:

Link Area	Trustee	Officer
Safeguarding	Andy Pear	Emma Hooley
SEND	Andy Pear	Emma Hooley
Digital	Robin McCluney	David Twambley

Health & Safety and Facilities	Martin Ashcroft	James Routs	
Mental Health & Wellbeing	Helen Ranson	Leanne Takaki	
Climate Change and Sustainability	Martin Ashcroft	David Twambley	
Diversity and Inclusivity	TBC	Leanne Takaki	
Careers	TBC	TBC	
<p>AH informed Trustees that link Trustee role descriptors are being developed.</p> <p>h. Strategic Staffing Update-part 2 item</p> <p>i. Strategic Safeguarding Update</p> <p>Paper 9i provided an update. Trustees noted the progress made in meeting the 2022-24 Safeguarding Strategic Priorities. Trustees requested an explanation of the parent categories mentioned in the report. EH would provide this. ACTION</p>			EH
<p>Dates and times of Trust Board Meetings 2024-25:</p> <p>Thursday 3rd October 2024</p> <p>Thursday 12th December 2024</p> <p>Thursday 27th March 2025</p> <p>Thursday 17th July 2025</p> <p>Meetings to commence at 10:00 am and be followed by a light lunch. Venues TBC.</p> <p>Trustees were asked to reserve their diaries from 9:00 am to allow time for a presentation preceding the meeting.</p> <p>It was further proposed that meetings in 2025-26 academic year would align with the corresponding date in 2024-25.</p>			

The meeting closed at 4:11 pm