



TRUST BOARD LEARNING COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Learning Committee of the Trust Board of South East Cornwall Multi Academy Regional Trust held on Monday 13th December 2021 at 6.15 pm.

Present	Yes/No	In Attendance	Yes/No
Mr J Crisp	Apologies	Mrs K Williams, Clerk	Yes
Mrs H Casson	Yes	Mr D Buckley	Yes
Ms R Brooks	Yes		
M R Newton Chance - Chair	Yes		

Summary of matters for the Trust Board

- a) The Peer Review process has restarted in the schools.
- b) The SMART Learning Model has been reviewed and it is hoped that impact of the changes to a spiral conceptual based curriculum will be evident in a number of subjects possibly as soon as later in the year for some subjects such as Geography.
- c) The exam results in Maths and English as core subjects should be a key focus for LGCs particularly at Liskeard and Saltash. LGCs should discuss the measures being used to by Senior Leaders to reassure themselves that progress is occurring at the correct pace.
- d) Mr Buckley's evaluation of the of the current MAT Strategic Plan has been reviewed by the Learning Committee in terms of the SMART Learners section. The Trust Board Committees will receive further updates in the Spring term.

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Declaration of Business or Pecuniary Interest and Academy-related parties - update on any changes since completion of written declaration

None.

3. Apologies

Apologies had been sent by Mr Crisp in advance of the meeting which were received and accepted by the Committee.

4. Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting held on 26th May 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th May 2021 having been circulated in advance, were agreed as an accurate record and will be signed.

5. Matters Arising

M38. Ofsted: Science and RE

e) A Trustee noted that the learning model should be discussed as the main topic in the next Learning Committee meeting. Clerk to add to the agenda.

Update: On this agenda.

6. Consider the SMART learning model

- a) Mr Buckley advised that there had been concerns previously around the use of knowledge-based curriculums which was further highlighted by OFSTED. The Trust has undertaken work on the learning model with staff. Each November, we discuss the next stage of the journey and have a June day for subject leads. At the most recent November curriculum day, it was evident that we have made considerable progress and now all departments can confirm that they are beyond stage 1 on the journey of full adoption of the model.
- b) There is now a universal understanding by all teachers in the Trust that we are defining learning as a permanent change to a person's schema. All curricula now spiral around a set of core subject concepts rather than around topics or factual knowledge. Knowledge Organisers are being used and there is debate on how and when to use them. All teachers should know what concept they are teaching or preparing children for in each lesson.
- c) The same structure is in place across all the schools and there is a good understanding of the key concepts and the right language. The place where subjects have had difficulty, is in terms of tracking concepts from year to year and teachers understand that deep misconceptions can hamper children's learning.
- d) **A Trustee asked for clarification on the observations of the misconceptions.** Mr Buckley advised that there was an issue with teachers being unaware of the misconceptions or excessively using scaffolding to simplify the content and work around the misconceptions. Each stage of the current work we are doing is supporting teachers as they lean to spot and address these
- e) **Trustees noted the complexity of this work and asked if this takes different amounts of time for individual teachers to understand.** Mr Buckley advised that this is a long-term piece of work and middle leaders were highly appreciative that the timescale of five years was presented at the start. Some staff have made considerable progress very quickly and some have found it more challenging but we have come a long way through the process and have mapped out the next stages.
- f) **A Trustee asked if it does need to be so complex.** Mr Buckley noted the importance of high expectations of staff and the need for professional reading. **A Trustee asked if Trustees could see evidence of impact of this.** Mr Buckley advised that the only test of the impact of this work so far has been at Trewidland during their recent OFSTED visit.
- g) Mr Buckley advised that we have made assumptions on the levels of staff professional training and have had to go deeper at times to raise expectations. For example we were initially confused as to why staff were finding it so hard to consider the tracking of concepts and skills but found that some staff believed that examination questions were the only form of assessment needed and once they had been trained that there were multiple forms they had much greater understanding of how we could use assessment for concepts.
- h) **A Trustee suggested that there could be more of the science of learning which could be added to the document.** Mr Buckley advised that professional reading is now more common so this could be added. Also, opportunities for learning from our own research are beginning to open up. A project in which the same geography concepts will be taught next term across all the schools and all year groups at the same time which is exciting for staff to witness and opens opportunities for staff learning and further development, seeing children's development as it is happening.
- i) Trustees noted the simple starting point in the Learning Model document in the three-page summary and acknowledged that it is designed for the professionals in schools.

7. Review the educational performance of the Trust's schools

Consider 2021 exam results and primary assessment data. Documents have been circulated in advance of the meeting. From these:

- a) It was advised that the Looe Peer Review has been circulated to Trustees by email and noted this is a valuable exercise. Mr Buckley explained there has been a fundamental change in the view of the Trust since the last Peer Review. The work with the new Assistant Heads will be really valuable. Mr Newton Chance, as Chair of the Trust Board meets at the school prior to the Peer Review with the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors and felt this was an important part of the process which should be retained in future.
- b) **A Trustee noted from the exam results that Maths and English at Liskeard and Saltash are a concern.** Mr Buckley advised that we have been through a CAGs (Centre Assessed Grades) and TAGs (Teacher Assessed Grades) robust process so we are as realistic as we can be in terms of exam results. Literacy levels in the local area are variable.
- c) **A Trustee noted the high disadvantaged rates in Liskeard and the number of students with reduced literacy skills.** Mr Buckley advised that there are very low starting points for these children but the cohort in Saltash, some of whose families are from Plymouth, shows the aspirations of parents.
- d) **A Trustee asked about the extent of issues with literacy and numeracy in the Primary schools and does this continue into secondary.** It was noted that the gap for disadvantaged children is getting larger despite intervention and catch up and this is worrying going forward. Mr Buckley advised that we have been hit by Covid which has meant that children are now likely to lose 2.5 years of learning over the course of their education in SW schools, and the impact on the disadvantaged students is significant.
- e) **A Trustee asked for exam results to be in the same format next year as this would make comparison easier.** Mr Buckley advised that this information is normally included in the Headteacher's Report but this has not been in use due to the pandemic so it is in varying formats this year.
- f) **A Trustee noted the amount of lost learning due to staff absence nationally and asked if this is a problem at the SMART schools and what is the contingency plan for this.** Mr Buckley advised that this has been a problem with Trewidland and Dobwalls which resulted in the schools being closed due to staff shortages. Mr Buckley summarised the situation in both schools. Mr Buckley noted that some staff in the Trust have returned to work but have still not been well and have needed phased return. **A Trustee suggested that data is needed on staff absence.** Mr Buckley noted data is being recorded and that the approach being used is "shared impact".
- g) **A Trustee queried if there is an issue for English in Liskeard.** Mr Buckley advised that results have been formulated as close to the previous school profile as possible. **A Trustee noted that there is a pattern of low language skills in English in Liskeard and queried if this is a teaching issue.** Mr Buckley summarised staffing changes, Covid disruptions and developments in English and how each may have impacted but warned that until there are national benchmarked tests available again it is hard to gauge relative performance

8. **Review the curriculum offer and consider developments to the curriculum**

- a) This has been covered in the Learning Model discussion.

9. **Monitor the MAT Strategic Plan towards the Trust's objectives**

- a) The revised MAT Strategic Plan document from the Trust Board meeting is the main focus for this meeting, rather than the previous plan
- b) The SMART Learners' section which includes "remove disadvantage", "challenge our most able" and "personalise learning for all" come within the remit of the Learning Committee.
- c) Evaluation of progress made on current 5-year plan
Mr Buckley advised that in terms of the "Remove disadvantage" objective we have failed to

remove disadvantage and successes have been variable. Covid will have further impacted this although we have managed to review PP (Pupil Premium) plan each year and evaluate improvements where they have been achieved. Our decision to implement a conceptual learning model is a key part of our strategy for addressing learning loss and disadvantage but it is not established enough yet for us to have seen the impact. The first indications other than the positive last two OFSTED reports may be in Geography as this is the subject that has progressed most quickly and consistently so far It is expected we should see some limited impact later this year.

- d) In terms of the “question deeply”, it occurred to us that we should not reduce the intellectual content and we should be looking at a model which incorporates all learners.
- e) The challenge for the “more able” group is better and we have managed to introduce SECRET skills in some places better than others.
- f) We are proposing in this next five-year plan that we bring all of learning together through the learning model rather than the previous position of having separated it into more able, disadvantaged and personalisation. **A Trustee noted that within this document there is an emphasis on everyone having the right to access an education which allows them to access higher levels of knowledge.** Mr Buckley advised that there is a fundamental shift in approach from “scaffolding”.
- g) The Learning Committee will be focusing on the two new aims within the SMART Learners section and how they are used across the Trust. **Trustees noted Mr Buckley’s thorough assessment of the aims.**
- h) Mr Buckley referred to the SMART communities’ section and that pupil leadership was also relevant to the Learning Committee.
- i) **A Trustee asked what is the next stage in the development process of the MAT Strategic Plan.** Mr Buckley advised that the outcome of strategy discussions on the 8 aims will come to the Trust Board Committee meetings in the Spring term.

10. **Review of Policies**

- a) None.

11. **Guidance/instructions to LGCs**

- a) The Peer Review process has restarted across the Trust.
- b) The exam results in Maths and English as core subjects should be a key focus for LGCs particularly at Liskeard and Saltash. LGCs should discuss the measures being used to by Senior Leaders to reassure themselves that progress is occurring at the correct pace.
- c) The MAT 5 Year Strategic Plan is under review and will be shared with LGCs in the Spring for comment.

12. **Summary of matters for the Trust Board**

- a) The Peer Review process has restarted in the schools.
- b) The SMART Learning Model has been reviewed and it is hoped that impact of the changes to a spiral conceptual based curriculum will be evident in a number of subjects possibly as soon as later in the year for some subjects such as Geography.
- c) The exam results in Maths and English as core subjects should be a key focus for LGCs particularly at Liskeard and Saltash. LGCs should discuss the measures being used to by Senior Leaders to reassure themselves that progress is occurring at the correct pace.

- d) Mr Buckley's evaluation of the of the current MAT Strategic Plan has been reviewed by the Learning Committee in terms of the SMART Learners section. The Trust Board Committees will receive further updates in the Spring term.

For information:

13. **Summary points from LGCs**

- a) Circulated to Trustees for information.

14. **Agreements made by email**

- a) None.

15. **Date of next meetings:**

15.02.2022 and 06.06.2022 at 6pm.

Trustees noted how impressive the work is that Mr Buckley has continued to drive during the pandemic and they thanked Mr Buckley for his hard work and commitment.

The meeting closed at 7.07.