



TRUST BOARD LEARNING/PEOPLE COMMITTEE

Minutes of a virtual Meeting of the Learning & People Committee of the Trust Board of South East Cornwall Multi Academy Regional Trust held on at 6.30 pm.

Present	Yes/No	In attendance	Yes/No
Prof V Campbell Barr, Safeguarding	Yes	Mr D Buckley, CEO	Yes
Mr C Hodges	Yes	Mr K Carrington, DoE	Yes
Mrs L Lawson, Health & Wellbeing	Apologies	Ms K Williams, Clerk to Trust Board	Yes
Mr A Martin	Yes		
Ms S Pike, SEND	Yes		
Miss K Reed, Careers	Apologies		

Summary of matters for the Trust Board

- a) The belonging framework was discussed as part of SMART day and there is good staff buy in.
- b) The NGA White paper changes to SEND summary is useful. Mr Buckley and Mr Carrington will be attending a regional SEND group meeting on the 11th of March to discuss further.
- c) The Learning and People will be looking at the model for Peer Reviews moving forwards.
- d) The rates of suspension and exclusions are currently sitting between national and regional benchmarks so we are not an outlier in this regard.
- e) Attendance remains a focus and the schools are now using VYED (DfE) data which provides opportunity for further discussions with Headteachers.

50. **Welcome**

Mr Buckley welcomed everyone to the meeting.

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

There were no changes declared.

52. **Apologies for Absence**

Miss Reed and Mrs Lawson sent their apologies in advance of the meeting and these were received and accepted by the committee.

53. **Approval of minutes of meeting held on 20-01-2026**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20-01-2026 having been circulated in advance, were agreed as an accurate record.

54. **Matters Arising**

M47. Headteacher's Reports – Any questions to ask or deep dives needed in future meetings

c) A Trustee queried if it is possible to review live documents. Mr Buckley advised that Trustees could have access to live versions. The reason we give a hard copy is so that we can all discuss the same a version. It was noted that view only rights could be given and all documents are kept in Teams but it is still helpful for there to be a hardcopy for meetings.

Update: The Clerk had discussed access with Mrs Asker, the CEO's PA.

55. **Director of Education Verbal Update – Kristien Carrington including**

- *Belonging agenda*
- *Attendance*
- *Behaviour and behaviour systems and interventions*

a) Belonging agenda

Mr Buckley advised that the Belonging framework has been circulated. We have debated all the models available in terms of the Thrive agenda. We have always believed that there is more education than just the scripted elements of education and holistic approaches are key to success. This time last year, belonging became a priority for all schools in their SDPs (School Development Plans).

b) SMART day had a focus on the belonging agenda and Mr Buckley explained that there is lots of buy in from staff. There have been examples of what we should include in the framework offered by staff and how we actively teach the key concepts. So far the framework is aligned to what staff believe it should contain. We have started to look at the measures and identified areas where we are doing things right at the moment. We have had such good buy in, it was quite surprising.

c) **A Trustee asked if this framework has been taken to students yet.** Mr Buckley advised we have not given the framework to them yet but will at the next student council meeting. **A Trustee noted the importance of student voice and students feeling listened to and being able to see action as a result.** Mr Buckley advised that we have a Hart's ladder system in place and very active student leadership in all the schools. In Looe, there has been a step back but they will reintroduce this following the recent Ofsted visit.

d) **A Trustee felt this was an impressive document and pleased to hear it has been through a consultation process with EYFS input. A Trustee asked how we plan to use and share it.** Mr Buckley explained that we have needed to have examples of current practice. In the SDPs there is belonging but no clear measures which we have now defined. Mr Buckley added that we have debated how we widen opportunities for students. Student voice has already progressed in all the schools but understandably less in Looe. Liskeard have now opened up the library following a child led project to bring this area of the school back into use at social times. Students have told us generally across the Trust that they feel safe and we need to develop from this and ensure the language used enhances their psychological safety also.

e) **A Trustee asked about inclusivity of student voice and how are we making sure that we are included the voice of all pupils not just selected groups.** Mr Buckley advised that student voice and leadership is a passion of his. Trewidland and Dobwalls students all have a leadership role. Landulph is almost there in this respect. At Saltash, all year groups have at least 10 student representatives which is extending to all year groups. Liskeard have 180 students in leadership roles. At Saltash, they are working towards all students having access to a leadership role and have an umbrella model within which to organise these. Liskeard have numerous opportunities in place but not yet an umbrella model.

f) **A Trustee noted that there had been feedback from Liskeard students that they don't feel listened too and queried how the Trust Board monitor this.** Mr Carrington advised that during pupil conferencing at Liskeard, there was some negative feedback from a limited number of students but when compared to the Right On Survey results, the Liskeard students had been positive about their experiences at school. Mr Carrington added that wellbeing and belonging is in the SDPs as part of improving attendance and we are already ahead of the curve as belonging is more than putting on extra-curricular clubs. At Looe, 90% of the disadvantaged pupils in Year 10 have not engaged with extra-curricular clubs. Mr Buckley explained the leadership opportunities was the highest marked element in all the school student surveys with the exception of Looe. We need to give students training on what it means to be a representative prior to asking them to represent so that we give the role the respect it deserves. We had to lower the priority of these

items whilst bringing about introduction of firmer routines but since these have been introduced we have had two years of development work so far.

- g) **A Trustee queried if it would be useful for Professor Campbell-Barr to attend pupil forums to raise the profile of the Trust Board and as part of Trust Board monitoring.** Mr Buckley felt this would be brilliant.
- h) **A Trustee noted that some models require that all monitoring must have an element of pupil voice which should have a broad cross section of the pupil population with a register to ensure that there is a broad capture of perspectives.** Mr Buckley advised that we also mandate the use of pupil voice in all of these monitoring roles but only Dobwalls and Saltash currently keep a register of pupils of which pupils are involved in each opportunity.
- i) Attendance
Mr Carrington explained that we are using VYED (DfE) data about attendance and each half term a report is generated by the DfE. Mr Carrington advised that key information is taken from the report and from September 2026, the target given is what the school will be judged against even those these targets are controversial. The areas of strength and what to focus on are also included in the report and the schools can compare themselves to schools of a similar size and make up.
- j) At Looe, attendance is standing at 88% and they are coming out low compared to other schools so attendance continues to be a key focus. There are no quick fixes or silver bullets when looking to improve attendance. The Primary schools are also coming out lower in comparison to other schools which has been a surprise as systems are robust. Staff capacity is making things more challenging at Looe in terms of improving attendance but this is not the case at the primary schools. The numbers are too small at Trewidland so no report is produced.
- k) We are working with Marjon's university at the secondary schools. We have been surveying students and surveying and meeting with parents. This will give us data on how we compare to schools in the southwest. We are also working with the Rise groups and Looe staff will be going to Penrice to see what we can learn from them.
- l) **A Trustee liked the format of the report and was pleased to see there is support from external agencies. A Trustee noted transition points in terms of attendance and asked if we are building a belonging strategy, is this a consideration.** Mr Carrington advised that One Cornwall are looking at this and he is heading up the transition group with this organisation. It involves staff continuing to be involved with the families even though they have moved on for a period of time.
- m) Exclusions and suspensions
Mr Carrington advised that this picture is feeling more positive even though it is still high. The suspensions rate sits comfortably between the national and regional picture. The trend is improving in one of the schools. Mr Carrington explained that there is a lag in the data for Looe as there was not the same level of focus in implementing the behaviour expectations as at Saltash and Liskeard. Looe's suspension rate increased in autumn of last academic year. Liskeard had been much higher than national suspension rates which has now come down. The narrative behind this is the work in 2023/24 had had an impact and the trend is now down. Projecting the data trend is that national and regional data will be much higher but our three schools are sitting between this so we are not an outlier.
- n) Mr Carrington advised that the data gives opportunity for there to be discussions with Headteachers. Year 8 and Year 9 have higher numbers of suspensions than Years 10 and 11. Mr Carrington explained that during the autumn term, half of students have been suspended for persistent disruptive behaviour. There is a low number of suspensions for bullying and at Saltash there have been a number of suspensions for drug related issues. Mr Carrington added that Liskeard are above the national suspension rate. Boys are a concern at Liskeard. For disadvantaged students, our school rates are significantly better than regional rates and EHCP (Education and

Health are Plans) students are doing better than national. There are real discrepancies for the number of children being recorded as SENDK at Liskeard and the SEND group are exploring this.

- o) We are sitting within regional and national picture overall. We are also looking at what happens when students return after suspension. We have been able to show that when there are no interventions recorded, 50% of students had a repeat suspension whereas when compared to those who had intervention only 8% reoffended. We need to ensure that we have detail of what happens when the student returns to school and this data makes this clearer which strategies are being most effective and on what needs to happen.

- p) **A Trustee thanked Mr Carrington for the summary and noted there is a continued focus on SEND. A Trustee advised that he would send some questions but he asked if there a disconnect or missed learning in the many panels that take place for pupil disciplinary or permanent exclusions and as these are lengthy processes, can anything be passed on and there is a reliance on the Clerk passing this information on.** Mr Carrington advised the Clerk does pass on comprehensive information and he does take this forward with the schools.

Action: Mr Hodges

- q) **The Chair felt that it would be useful for these questions to be shared. A Trustee asked how many suspensions are as a result of failure in the reset and reflection rooms.** Mr Carrington noted this analysis has not been done yet but around 50% of suspensions are a result of failures in the Reset room at Looe but it is expected to be a low rate at Saltash. Mr Buckley noted that looking at the origin of the suspension would be useful. Mrs Del Gaudio has noted that having pre-suspension phone calls is having a positive impact at Saltash. Mr Carrington will look into the actions taken pre suspension.

Action: Mr Carrington

- r) The Clerk to add Mr Hodges questions and Mr Carrington's answers to the minutes.

Action: The Clerk

- s) **What research or best practice models around reducing suspension rates have you identified? Are there any schools or Trusts (with similar contextual factors) that have a track record of reducing suspensions, and, if so, have you been able to visit them, or is this a plan.**

In terms of research and best practice models, TSLT have been pointed in the direction of the EEF for implementation of strategies such as their guidance report on Improving Behaviour in Schools with especially useful sections on relationships and the use of targeted approaches. This together with Tom Bennett's independent review of behaviour in schools (ref in the Relationships and Behaviour for Learning Policy) and Paul Dix's 'When the adults change...' have informed practice to date. The issue here is that these publications predate the pandemic and so, like everyone, we're looking at what our best bets are given the current unprecedented national picture. Through our involvement with the DfE RISE Behaviour and Attendance hub we have been connected with the Penrice Academy (judged Outstanding last Feb) part of the CELT trust. On Friday, the Deputy Trust Lead from CELT Richard Baker will be visiting Looe as part of an audit of where things are currently. This should provide us with either a useful steer or further external validation of the approach we're taking, something I can feed back to trustees when the learning committee meets next.

- t) **What proactive steps have already been taken in the Secondary schools to reduce the suspension rates in year 8 and 9 and what are the next steps.**

The SDP emphasis in each school on belonging and the work of producing the framework of what this means across the Trust is absolutely connected to what Secondaries are trying to do with KS3. The careful consideration of the curriculum offer and how the Secondaries use KS3 assessment data are also proactive next steps (albeit tangential but as I said on Monday, there are no magic bullets) being taken at the moment. Again, everyone is looking at this currently. In October I attended a DfE conference in Exeter titled 'Achieving and Thriving' where trusts that had gone a long way down the 'examresultsatallcosts' route were falling over themselves to convince us just how inclusive they really were. It was good to see the national agenda had moved in this direction. Just today I was in a meeting about assessment information and what the Secondaries do with it when they get it. They've no problem describing their Raising Standards work for KS4

and 5 but Saltash are at the beginning of this for KS3, Liskeard are leading the way with Looe some way back still. Shock horror, schools find some pupils in KS3 don't value whether they've done well or not in their assessments at KS3 when their school unwittingly communicates to them that this only matters from Y10 onwards...

u) **What are the next steps around evaluating impact.**

Zooming in on the strategies, going further than the agreed label to get at what it is we can identify about them that makes the difference. Now that the case can be made for the work of describing and recording those strategies being time well spent (not a given at the outset, they were a tough crowd those hard pressed Deputy and Assistant Heads) it will be far easier to go for greater and greater detail.

v) **What frequency do you intend to recapture and rerun data.**

Since reviewing the policy last year we've met termly, next meeting in a couple of weeks. The data is live (for a while there it felt like Final Score on a Saturday afternoon waiting to see which name was going to pop up next) but for the purposes of analysis and looking for trends anything more than half termly is unlikely to be helpful. With my burgeoning Excel skills (have recently seen the light of a pivot table) I should be able to produce something for the Learning Committee without too much difficulty either half termly or, more likely given the way those agendas are panning out, termly.

x) **How will you capture the strategies used across every reintegration meeting and how do you intend to identify which strategy (if a number of steps are put in place) has been most beneficial? In addition, will you try to align this to pupil's identified needs to understand which strategies are most successful for which needs profile. Whilst this feels like a very valuable line of enquiry that would give you an evidence-based approach to reintegration, it seems to be a considerable task that needs a clear methodology.**

We're still at the logistics stage in many respects. For example, I needed to let Saltash and Looe know recently that there were gaps appearing in the recording of their reintegration strategies against each suspension (met with a 'thanks for alerting us, down to recent staff absences, inconsistent HOYs, we've got the details and will update etc. sort of response). The approach was agreed; it is an additional administrative task but not insurmountable and something that will definitely benefit from the move to an information management system that is trust wide as opposed to school based. There is an awful lot I'm looking forward to about that day in the not too distant future for all sorts of things.

y) **Since persistent disruptive behaviour is the most common reason for suspension, has the Trust senior leadership team looked closely at class pedagogy? Do you believe current teaching across the schools is typically sufficiently engaging, differentiated, and inclusive.**

See above ref to KS3. There are some brilliant colleagues across the trust working on exactly this and it is absolutely connected to the work of the SEND group on what adaptive practices we should expect teachers to be able to work with. Very much one for the 'no magic bullets' line but I've seen some great progress here in recent weeks and work in recent terms on precision planning is already making a difference at Saltash.

z) **Has there been any attempt by senior staff to connect with pupils who exhibit disruptive behaviours and talk to them about their behaviour in lessons and if anything could better assist them to focus? (I do not mean at the point of the incident but at a later stage when the student is regulated) There are occasions when these behaviours *could* be the result of pupils not being engaged by the learning or not being able to access the curriculum fully. Students may not engage with the enquiry or be able to honestly reflect on their behaviour but in the right environment with the right person they might offer some valuable insight.**

Yes absolutely. Mr Boyes at Looe has been very proactive in introducing more layers of intervention/opportunities to avoid serious sanction which the recent appointment of a new AH there will really help him with.

- aa) **In your report you state “the work each school is doing with regards to well-being and the experience at key stage 3 will benefit from closer attention. “This seems like a fundamental question that may even require structural curriculum changes. Can you tell me who will give this matter closer attention and when.**

Underway and ongoing. In terms of the broader structures, we’re already in a good position in our Secondaries by having a genuine 3 year KS3 offer and as of last year all of our Secondaries became aligned with their KS4 structures (no more 1 year GCSEs anywhere). Every opportunity to work with curriculum leads is used to complement the SLTs in each Secondary who if anything need reassuring that it is absolutely the right thing to do to give KS3 the attention, analysis and intervention resources they naturally give children in Y11 and 13.

56. **SEND strategy update**

- a) Mr Buckley advised the NGA summary of the White paper is really useful. Key indicators for us are that EHCPs are not being removed but they will be defined for those students typically requiring the services of a special school; in place of this there will be an IEP for a larger number of students. It would be unusual for schools to have EHCP students but we will have lots of students on newly defined action plans and action plan PLUS. This is a reframing of the SENDK model that we are already using. The universal provision is in line with what we are already doing as well as the targeted approach.
- b) The specialist support has gone further in the White paper so we have not put in the number three for adaptations being used by teachers in classrooms. We seem to have had fewer parental complaints generally since introducing the framework and policies are easier to understand. We are meeting with the SEND cross Trust team in two weeks. We are going to propose to the team that a next focus should be on, increasing the skills of teachers in terms of adapting practice and approaches on a one to one basis. This should be integrated into the T&L framework as part of CPD.
- c) **A Trustee asked if the legal team said it was okay to have three adaptations for classroom teaching.** Mr Buckley advised that the legal team had no concern as whilst the EHCPs are a legal document and we must deliver this, the school must only action what is reasonable in the setting.
- d) **A Trustee noted that the White paper is not law yet and EHCPs are still in place and asked do we need to know more precisely what will be legally binding and how enforceable will the new ISP be.** Mr Buckley advised that the government are attempting to change the model away from a legally adversarial one to one that gives an incentive to put more funding into the classroom. They are moving towards collective rights rather than a wide number of individually expressed rights. Mr Buckley added that the government are moving away from a legally binding system but are proposing that they hold schools to account in terms of us having effective IEPs and holding us to account on how we evaluate how students are making progress. Removal or reduction in spending on adversarial measures such as tribunal costs has been shown to lead to worse SEND outcomes generally whereas directing these funds instead into the classroom shows positive impact
- e) **A Trustee noted that she is uncomfortable that parents are being blamed for the tribunal costs.** Mr Buckley clarified that there was no place for blame in the system and that such language only emerges in adversarial systems where someone is to blame rather than a system that is clear to all be working on the same common goals of meeting the needs of children. Mr Buckley advised that there is a commitment to meeting needs from all sides but it is unrealistic to have expansion of EHCPs to the point where funding is not available, there are EHCPs but there is not the funding for them. The focus is moving away from the current adversarial system.
- f) **A Trustee queried the date of the SEND meeting.** Mr Carrington advised it is on the 11th of March.
- g) **A Trustee noted she has looked at national data and teachers wanting TAs and asked what can be done to support adaptive teaching. A Trustee noted that nurseries will not have qualified teachers and asked will their voices be included in terms of what training they need.** Mr Buckley

advised we want to have a pedagogical contact in the schools and Ms Laing from Dobwalls works with Dobwalls nursery. Ms Geevesis trained for Trewidland. We don't have anyone in place for Landulph yet because the nursery is not yet in place but this will be set up and established once it is. All nursery staff were included in SMART day.

- h) Mr Carrington noted that no staff at Saltash use white background as this has a negative impact on students with dyslexia and we may move towards having strategies such as this across the Trust as accepted practice. Mr Buckley noted that we will be looking at training for adaptive teaching.

57. **Saltash Peer Review**

- a) Mr Buckley advised that we were tasked with looking at the general picture and reviewed the judgements made on the SEF (Self Evaluation Framework) and also the sixth form and progress in this area is good. We also looked at the Science provision which is not so good and we will be starting intensive Trust support for this department.
- b) We pulled the Trewidland Peer Review as it was just after their Ofsted visit. Mr Buckley wants to get Trustees involved with the upcoming summer term Peer Reviews. The team can focus on any area of the Trustees choosing and we have plenty of expertise. The peer review scope is now wide open and a refresh of the model would be useful. Dobwalls is due next but for the summer term reviews, we can discuss the models to provide useful QA for governance.
- c) **A Trustee felt that belonging and how this is being embed, SEND which is also a strong focus and behaviour would be key areas of future reviews. It would also be interesting to hear what Headteachers want from the reviews.** Mr Buckley advised that Headteachers draw down on three areas which they are concerned about most. Mrs Del Gaudio had been discussing Science, the sixth form and an overall sweep of general areas. We only intervene when we believe the Headteacher's haven't selected the right areas to focus on.
- d) The areas of focus could be set by Headteachers, Local Governors and Trustees. Mr Buckley advised that Liskeard and Landulph are due in the summer. We can start looking at the data now so that Trustees have a clear understanding of what the focuses might be. He added that it might be useful for the Headteacher to determine two areas and the Trust Board to agree one area. Governors could be invited to the Trust Board meeting to report back or Trustees could meet prior to a peer review. We would expect there to be observations and pupil voice but Trustees could stipulate further. The next time we meet as the committee, we will be able to meet and discuss further. The Clerk to add to the agenda. It was suggested that inviting the Chair of Governors for this debate would be useful.

Action: The Clerk

58. **Monitoring of the progress towards the Strategic Plan**

https://www.smart-trust.net/_site/data/files/pdf/9A8264BA32DBABAE07DF4275A26AD3C0.pdf

- a)
 - Aim 2 continuous progress of all staff
 - Aim 3 Develop leadership at all levels
 - Aim 4 Excellence in governance
- b) Mr Buckley advised that milestones are set for the end of the year. Targets will be different for each school so we have not set specific targets for each aim in previous year. We have trialled to see if Trust wide targets are meaningful this year but we only included end of year KPIs so they can't be RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rated at this point in the year.

Mr Hodges left the meeting at 19.23.

59. **SEF – Review and consider any changes**

- a) Mr Buckley advised that Ofsted agreed with all the assessments made in the SEF at Looe. The SEF is well managed and accurate. We need to be braver about having deep greens. No reviews are needed of the SEF as Ofsted have verified the judgments.

60. **Review of Policies**

None.

61. **Guidance/instructions to LGCs**

- a) The belonging framework was discussed as part of SMART day and there is good staff buy in.
- b) The NGA White paper changes to SEND summary is useful. Mr Buckley and Mr Carrington will be attending a regional SEND group meeting on the 11th of March to discuss further.
- c) The Learning and People will be looking at the model for Peer Reviews moving forwards.
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- e) Attendance remains a focus and the schools are now using VYED (DfE) data which provides opportunity for further discussions with Headteachers.

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

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63. **Summary points from LGCs**

- a) Summary points had been circulated for Trustees information.

64. **Headteacher's Reports – Any questions to ask or deep dives needed in future meetings**

- a) The reports have been circulated and Trustees may wish to raise anything that has not been discussed at LGC (Local Governing Committee) level.
- b) Mr Carrington's report does supersede the Headteacher Reports and this information is reviewed at every meeting now.

Ms Pike left the meeting at 19.26.

- c) **A Trustee noted that there are lots of red and we have discussed this during Mr Carrington's update.** Mr Buckley explained that we can make some areas into amber if we look at risk appetite further rather than using national benchmark. Mr Carrington advised that attendance is red across the board and we have discussed this with Ofsted and the data shows that there are nuances in terms of attendance. Mr Buckley advised we can use the VYED data as none of our schools would then be red. Mr Carrington explained he can look at what this would look like in preparation for the next meeting. Mr Buckley advised that Headteachers would RAG rate against the VYED data rather than have the spreadsheet self-populate.
- d) Action for Mr Carrington to prepare a duplicate set of attendance data alongside the next Heads report but colour coded in line with the VYED Red, Amber, Green criteria for Trustees to consider if we should switch to this model.

Action: K Carrington

