



## 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 Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023 at 6.00 pm.

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<b>Present</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>In attendance</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
Miss G Adams	Yes	Mr D Buckley, CEO	Yes
Ms R Brooks	Yes	Mrs K Williams, Clerk to Trust Board	Yes
Mr J Crisp - Chair	Yes		

### **Summary of matters for the Trust Board**

- a) The Trust continues to work on suitable approaches to assess the position of subjects in secondary schools. The current methods are robust although time consuming for staff.
- b) Student and staff attendance is an ongoing concern for schools. The Trust and Headteachers are working with a DfE advisor and there has been a temporary appointment of a Trust Wide attendance lead.
- c) The OFSTED grading of RI at Saltash has been discussed by the committee.
- d) The committee have reviewed the progress towards aim 1, 5 and 6 of the Strategic Plan. There is a consistent and strong pupil voice across the Trust.

### **14. Welcome**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

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

There were no declarations.

### **16. Apologies for Absence**

All Trustees were present.

### **17. Approval of minutes of meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022 having been circulated in advance, were agreed as an accurate record and will be signed.

### **18. Matters Arising**

There were no actions from the last meeting or matters arising.

### **19. Consider the analysis from the outcomes of the 2022 exam results**

- a) Mr Buckley advised that the Trustees report was published before Christmas and this included the main issues for the schools.
- b) The IDSR data is accessible to Trustees and Mr Buckley advised that areas of concerns appear in the report. This data gives the best analysis from a third party and the Trustee report gives a summary of issues.

- c) Mr Buckley explained that SATs results are provided to governors who are reviewing progress of children. Mr Buckley advised that there is some difficulty in compiling a detailed analysis by subject for the secondary schools and a finding a suitable mechanism for triangulating this information governors and Trustees other than from GCSE and A level results.
- d) Mr Buckley advised that we are trying to address this and have tried two different ways. The first being having a deep focus into one subject across the Trust, the most recent being Science. We have spoken with the Heads of Departments and then talked to the students to enable us to give an assessment of conceptual learning in that subject. The strengths of this process is that it is very detailed but it is time consuming so we have only managed to cover four subjects.
- e) The second approach is subject leaders presenting on plans and developments to the senior leadership and a sample of these are seen in the Peer Reviews and visits to schools. Some subjects have had a deep dive and this gives us an indication of the position of the subject.
- f) **A Trustee felt that finding the right approach is a challenge and the approaches tried so far are robust but this is a time consuming process.** Mr Buckley advised that the School Development Plan (SDP) determines most of the work of the governors although they could be involved in the subject assessment process. There is also a challenge of having enough governors to cover all subject areas. Mr Buckley added that there is still a considerable question on how to reassure Trustees in terms of risk management for this area which needs further development.
- g) Mr Crisp explained that termly course reviews are used in Higher Education which are data rich and use a RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rated process. It was discussed that this is difficult to implement at secondary level. Mr Crisp noted that Higher Education data is being used to inform intent. Mr Buckley added that student attendance is an issue nationally following the pandemic and making sure that students feel they are making progress is important.
- h) Mr Buckley explained that the role of Trustees is strategic so we should acknowledge what are the key debates within a strategy as this will be valuable to help us set a future strategy. It was suggested that looking at what other Trusts have in place would be beneficial.

20. **Consider the Headteacher's Reports**

*Are there any areas which require a deeper delve at future meetings?* Documents were circulated in advance of the meeting. From these:

- a) Mr Buckley advised that the Headteachers' report show the key indicators which are benchmarked to national data. They should enable Local Governing Committees (LGCs) to ask deeper questions where there are reds and ambers on the report. Mr Buckley explained that the red and amber areas should be picked up by the governors and Headteacher and there should be evidence of this in the meeting minutes. Attendance data is red and therefore should be raised in LGC meetings. Mr Buckley noted that we are still not at a deep enough level of questioning by governors.
- b) Mr Buckley advised that the drop in numbers at Saltash in their sixth form is a risk and is highlighted in the reports. We are below where we want to be in terms of student attendance and we have DfE support for this. The DfE lead is meeting with the headteachers at the schools and we have also made a temporary appointment to have a Trust Wide lead in attendance.
- c) Staff attendance is also an issue and below national average. Over 50% is Covid related, followed by flu like symptoms but in terms of stress related illness, this is actually lower than previous years.
- d) **A Trustee referred to the numbers of new staff joining and this is a high number in Saltash.** Mr Buckley advised that we have had a turnover of staff due to the pandemic and movement due to retirement. We have had difficulty in recruitment to Science at Liskeard although recruitment overall has been a challenge for many Trusts.

- e) **A Trustee asked for clarification on staff induction processes in the Trust.** Mr Buckley advised that the process is immediate and he personally meets with new staff to give them a clear understanding of our ethos and intent. Mr Buckley explained that he asks for feedback during this process and schools continue to have autonomy in inducting their new staff.
- f) **A Trustee referred to the Headteachers' Report and noted that there is a variation in narratives and asked if it is possible to have a standardised approach.** Mr Buckley explained that we revised the format of the Headteachers' Report has all the Headteachers were using a common format but this has relaxed so it is worth reiterating that they should be using a standard format.
- g) **A Trustee noted the positive nature of staff induction in the Trust and acknowledged that there is a need to have a focus on wellbeing for staff so they are able to support students.** Mr Buckley advised that we have a number of commitments towards staff one of which is to provide a professional environment for them to feel safe in and they have a right to this. Staff should also be consulted on changes which will affect them at work. Mr Buckley advised that the use of STAR projects is now embedded across the Trust and the positivity of this in terms of staff ownership of developments.
- h) **A Trustee referred to attendance and suspensions data and noted that the number of suspensions at Saltash has increased but affect a smaller number of students and queried the amount and impact of broken learning.** Mr Buckley advised that OFSTED have noted this and have challenges us on how we are tracking missed learning. The Learning Model is developing and how do we raise the education base for staff has been discussed.
- i) **A Trustee referred to the increase of EHE (Elected Home Educated) students and the links to social and emotional issues and asked do the Headteachers work to collaboratively support these students and families.** Mr Buckley advised that the stance that senior leaders take is that it is always the correct place for the student to stay in school and we therefore do not endorse EHE. Parents can make the decision to EHE independently from the school so we can review the barriers for this. Headteachers are engaging with parents to discuss their perceptions towards culture changes of behaviour in schools.
- j) **A Trustee asked if all schools have commented on the numbers of EHE in the Headteacher Reports.** Mr Buckley advised that this is the case for those schools that have instances of EHE.
- k) **A Trustee noted the zero rates of suspensions for primary and asked if there is the same process as for secondary students.** Mr Buckley advised that we have the same process although suspensions are less common at primary levels. We have had suspensions at Dobwalls and Trewidland. The Local Authority (LA) has praised our Behaviour Policies as these are consistent across the Trust.
- l) **A Trustee queried behaviour tracking for pupils from primary and secondary and asked if where there are issues in primary, does this follow through to secondary school.** Mr Buckley advised that this is variable. There are cases where behaviour relates to childhood trauma and home circumstances and if this has not changed, it will continue to impact behaviour following transition to secondary. The challenges for schools and the lack of provision of specialist and alternative provision means that there are instances where schools have little choice but to permanently exclude students. OFSTED have checked the case of permanent exclusion at Saltash and have noted that nothing more could be done by the school in each case. **Trustees noted that permanent exclusions are the last resort and acknowledged the reality of the situation.** The impact of funding cuts on specialist provisions was acknowledged.

21. **OFSTED - Discuss the positions of schools who have been recently visited or are due an inspection in 2023**

- a) Mr Buckley advised that the Saltash OFSTED results have been published and prior to that, Landulph results were also released. In terms of Saltash's outcome, OFSTED saw some practices

which were RI but much of the provision was Good. Mr Buckley explained that the school's indicators on the IDSR have increased and this shows rapid improvement. OFSTED have suggested that the depth of questioning in governance could be deeper. We are currently discussing the indicators with OFSTED to determine whether there is any further guidance on the leadership next steps.

- b) **A Trustee asked who becomes the OFSTED nominee during an inspection.** Mr Buckley advised that this is always the Headteacher. It was noted that there is an inconsistency of OFSTED's understanding of the role of the Trust.
- c) **A Trustee queried staff training for OFSTED.** Mr Buckley advised that leadership capacity is improving but we don't currently have candidates that we could put forward for this at the moment.
- d) **A Trustee referred to monitoring and improving standards and asked is there a possibility for developing a school improvement partner.** Mr Buckley advised that Dobwalls and Saltash were supposed to have support following their last OFSTED gradings but this has been delayed. We now have support from CELT who will provide 10 days of support. Mr Buckley has been working with CACE to form a group for peer support and this can be used as a network to draw on.
- e) **A Trustee asked what has the impact to staff been at Saltash from the OFSTED RI grading.** Mr Buckley advised that prior to the OFSTED inspection, the staff had perceived that momentum and progress is good at the school so this has been a surprise for them. The capacity for leadership has demonstrated itself for being good. The leadership team are positive and ambitious.

## 22. Monitor the progress of the MAT Strategic Plan towards the Trust's objectives

A document had been circulated in advance of the meeting. From this:

### a) Aim 1 Equitable progress for all pupils

Mr Buckley advised that focus of the work for aim 1 is to try and improve deeper conceptual knowledge as part of the learning model. We held a curriculum day in November which was really valuable and the quality of pedagogical discussion was really high. The subject concept reviews have started and we are using feedback from students so we are progressing well in this area. SMART is in February with over 100 staff giving presentations and there are sessions in the afternoon for collective work.

### b) Aim 5 Developing engaged citizens

It has been good to receive praise from the LA on our behaviour policies. There was a formal complaint to OFSTED from a student during their inspection regarding students being split into gender groups by OFSTED. We have held a student conference with some good suggestions from them. **A Trustee noted a consistent and strong pupil voice across the Trust.** Mr Buckley noted that this is so important and needs to have a high status. Minutes from the Trust School Council are circulated to governors and Trustees. We still are an away off from having a self-directed system for the Trust Student Council so it continues to be led by the CEO.

### c) Aim 6 Trust as a positive civic entity

We now host Locality meetings for the LA and they have been arranged to coincide with the TAS (Team Around the School) meetings. We have 100 or so organisations in TAS and we are now trying to find a way for the two groups to work collectively together. CEP are making headway in looking at attendance and we should be in a position to report on actual data and case studies. **A Trustee noted bringing the two groups together is good rather than disbanding the TAS meetings which have been working well.**

## 23. Review of Policies

- a) None.

24. **Guidance/instructions to LGCs**  
 a) There was no feedback from this meeting.
25. **Summary of matters for the Trust Board**  
 a) The Trust continues to work on suitable approaches to assess the position of subjects in secondary schools. The current methods are robust although time consuming for staff.  
 b) Student and staff attendance is an ongoing concern for schools. The Trust and Headteachers are working with a DfE advisor and there has been a temporary appointment of a Trust Wide attendance lead.  
 c) The OFSTED grading of RI at Saltash has been discussed by the committee.  
 d) The committee have reviewed the progress towards aim 1, 5 and 6 of the Strategic Plan. There is a consistent and strong pupil voice across the Trust.
26. **Summary points from LGCs**  
 a) The minutes from the LGC meeting will be circulated to Trustees when ready.
27. **Agreements made by email**  
 a) None.
28. **Date of next meetings:**  
 06-06-2023 at 6pm.

It was suggested that structured curriculum with concept progression could be a topic for discussion at the next meeting. Attendance and EHE data with a detailed description of these cases could be requested from Headteachers for discussion along with county wide data from CEP. Work from CEP is also valuable to share with Trustees. Trustees will feedback what topics should be picked up at the next meeting.

**Action: All**

The meeting closed at 7.30pm

<b>Action Summary</b>	
<p><b>28. Date of next meetings</b>            It was suggested that structured curriculum with concept progression could be a topic for discussion at the next meeting. Attendance and EHE data with a detailed description of these cases could be requested from Headteachers for discussion along with county wide data from CEP. Work from CEP is also valuable to share with Trustees. Trustees will feedback what topics should be picked up at the next meeting.</p>	<p><b>Action: All</b></p>