



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 Tuesday 6th June 2023.

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

Summary of matters for the Trust Board

- a) The Learning Committee has fully reviewed the Strategic Risk Register. All risks are the same apart from the risk related to being excluded from expansion which has increased.
- b) The Committee has discussed how the LGCs are fulfilling their obligations towards learning issues. Mr Buckley will be providing further guidance to governors on “checking for understanding” and how the governors could potentially be involved with concept reviews in the future at the next Learning Link meeting.
- c) Trustees received an update on concept reviews and how they are being used to identify student misconceptions in subjects and how these are then tracked.
- d) The Committee have discussed students who are Elected Home Educated and the processes surrounding this. It was noted that there are students who are within mainstream settings who would benefit from being in a specialist provision. The cost of using Alternative Provisions this year has exceeded £300k which is not affordable long term.

29. Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

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

No declarations.

31. Apologies for Absence

Ms Brooks was expected to attend as apologies had not been received. The meeting was quorate as Mr Buckley was in attendance as a Trustee.

32. Approval of minutes of meeting held on 8th February 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th February 2023 having been circulated in advance, were agreed as an accurate record and will be signed.

33. Matters Arising

M28. Date of next meetings

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.

Update: On this agenda.

34. **Consider the Strategic Risk Register in terms of risks assigned to the Learning Committee**

Removing disadvantage gap, Developing engaged citizens, Equitable progress for all pupils, Continuous progress for all staff, Trust as a positive civic entity. A document has been circulated in advance of the meeting. From this:

a) Removing disadvantage gap

Mr Buckley advised that we have in place the Pupil Premium report which is published and scrutinised by governors. We have failed to close the gap so it is still a priority for the Headteachers. We have an assessment of data once per year and we track this through the Headteacher's report. Trustees were content with this approach.

b) Developing engaged citizens

We have a common agreed behaviour policy and have a priority on ethos and culture across the Trust. Looe and Saltash have kept this as a high priority. Saltash have received funding to change the toilets which will help with behaviour and Looe have a pastoral restructure.

Mr Buckley explained that we discuss data with Trustees and Governors and we address the quality of teaching through the SDPs (School Development Plans). Checking for understanding was found to be an issue at Saltash and work on this has been accelerated. Liskeard have identified that attention on learning and reducing distraction is a high priority. We could add in a mitigation by having an addition school improvement lead in the schools although we have put in an extra curriculum day. **A Trustee asked if peer reviews are still being undertaken.** Mr Buckley advised that we do have peer reviews and this should be added to the Strategic Risk Register.

Action: D Buckley

d) Equitable progress for all pupils

The peer reviews, bench marking and predictions are all actions which help us to ensure that data is high quality. Liskeard, Looe and Saltash have actions for this risk. Inaccurate assessments have been an issue at Looe, Liskeard are reviewing Quality Assurance systems and Saltash have this as a priority due to OFSTED.

e) **A Trustee asked if the schools approach exam readiness from a holistic overview.** Mr Buckley advised that we have reintroduced mocks and have brought back revision sessions at Liskeard and Looe. We have found that there has been a 60% increase in CAMHS referrals.

f) **A Trustee asked if attendance at mock exams has been good.** Mr Buckley advised that he has discussed this in general terms and attendance of Year 11 has been good but we may need to break down attendance data for Year 11s as there is a pattern on decreasing attendance for Year 11s.

g) **A Trustee queried the use of incentivisation for mocks and exams.** Mr Buckley advised that prom attendance has been linked to exam attendance at the schools. Attendance during the collapsed curriculum is generally good but attendance can drop despite all our efforts. Mr Buckley advised that we could look at compiling strategies used by the schools such as the more focussed use of breakfast clubs or other strategies to provide incentives.

Ms Brooks joined the meeting at 6.17pm.

h) Continuous progress for all staff

Mr Buckley advised that in terms of the risk of lower pupil numbers, we start early predicting numbers for sixth form and we make sure we advertise actively other offers available to students. **A Trustee queried the use of joint activities between Looe and Liskeard to help with sixth form recruitment as this may improve the image of Liskeard within the Year 11s in Looe.** Mr Buckley advised that holding the Trust Student Council at Looe was useful as the sixth formers were in

attendance. Trying to be active with the Liskeard sixth formers running sessions at Looe would be beneficial. Saltash have a drop in sixth form numbers again this year but there has been a positive change in leadership in the sixth form.

- i) **A Trustee thought that destination data would be useful to have.** Mr Buckley advised that Saltash and Liskeard have been impacted by Callywith and Plymouth colleges. If Saltash's sixth form were to close, there would not be a significant number of students who would travel to Liskeard. Liskeard and Saltash are both viable in terms of their sixth form numbers.
- j) Trust as a positive civic entity
Adverse media attention has been problematic this year. Positive news stories have helped with this but there are ongoing issues with social media. Mr Buckley advised that support for the Headteachers is a control factor to add as the impact of this can be significant.
- k) **A Trustee asked what approaches are used to deal with this.** Mr Buckley advised that we offer to meet with members of the community where possible. We can also use single points of contact with minuted meetings and in some cases, we can contact the police. **A Trustee asked how this is being picked up initially.** Mr Buckley advised that Headteacher's pick this up first and sometimes the Headteacher will request support and Mr Buckley will provide this and also get involved where policy requires it.
- l) **A Trustee asked if there is staff CPD on how to deal with these types of difficulties.** Mr Buckley advised that we have held training sessions including SMART day sessions on this topic that have included bringing in external expertise. We also have policies and procedures in place which are robust and support staff through these processes.
- m) In terms of organisational isolation, Mr Buckley explained that we have actively engaged with CACE and we have been trying to bring the staff together across the Trust. Trewidland and Dobwalls have actions in this area. Dobwalls have had some focused training in preparation for OFSTED.
- n) Mr Buckley advised that he is waiting for the outcome of RG (Regions Group formally RDD/RSC) discussions.
- o) **A Trustee noted that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a key theme in the education sector at the moment and asked if this has been discussed in the Trust.** Mr Buckley advised that this has been discussed with the Trust Student Council. The general view was that most students had not thought about it very much and felt it was largely exciting and they could see opportunities rather than the fear of it. However, as an education organisation, we need to take account of it in terms of E-Safety.
- p) **A Trustee suggested that in terms of plagiarism, the inappropriate use of AI is more of an issue in Higher Education.** Mr Buckley noted that the main issue with secondary and primary schools is with children believing they are talking to another child online. **A Trustee asked if there has been any issues with children purchasing exam questions.** Mr Buckley advised that this is hard to know.
- q) Having reviewed the risks allocated to the Learning Committee, it was agreed that the risk relating to being excluded from expansion should be higher but all other risks are the same and not increasing.

35. **Consider if the LGCs are fulfilling obligations towards Learning issues and consider the question of 'checking for understanding'**

- a) Mr Buckley advised that it is challenging to make sure that governors are asking searching enough questions without overstepping into the Headteacher's role. Mr Buckley added that we need to ensure that governors have confidence to ask questions on deeper understanding. Mr Buckley

explained that we will be discussing this further with governors at the forthcoming Learning Link meeting.

- b) **A Trustee asked how much steering do Headteacher's do with governor questions during visits for example.** Mr Buckley advised that the Governor Monitoring Plans help with this and the SDPs have milestones which governors should be checking. Mr Buckley added that the Chair of Trust Board also used to meet with the Chair of Governors prior to a peer review and we hope to adopt this again with Mr Hallam. This however could be picked up by the Learning Committee who would then give direct feedback to the Chair of Governors.
- c) Mr Buckley advised that we need to find ways to inspire governors in ways to check children's learning. Mr Buckley queried the triangulation of information for Trustees and if this process is robust. **A Trustee queried the confidence of governors to ask the correct questions.** Mr Buckley advised that Learning Link meetings help with this.
- d) **A Trustee suggested that parental voice and their perception of how children are progressing is useful.** Mr Buckley advised that the schools have about 70-80% attendance at parents' evenings. **A Trustee asked if we do specifically ask parents of their experiences and if their children are doing well.** Mr Buckley explained that OFSTED surveys can provide this information and we have previously used an external provider to survey parents. There is the question of how do we objectively know children are making good progress without exam results. Mr Buckley noted that if we rely in measurements, a further question is how do we gauge measures against each other.
- e) **A Trustee asked referred to the views of the Student Council and asked if all children are asked their views or just the student council.** Mr Buckley advised that we give out questions four weeks in advance and the student council are supposed to give them to class reps to ask the questions who then feedback the results. During Covid, we did get around 3000 responses to the questions that we posed to students. We need to make sure that student voice is higher prioritised and the complexities of capturing student and parental voice was discussed at length. Mr Buckley advised that concept reviews have been eye opening and involving governors in work of this nature would serve to inspire more as was as giving governors an understanding on what we are trying to achieve in schools.

36. Discuss Dobwalls Peer Review

- a) Mr Buckley advised that we have changed the format of the peer reviews so we have looked at the general overview of the school in areas that the Headteacher wanted a second opinion on. In Dobwalls we have looked at Maths and Reading which were both strong. There has been an issue found in how the school is checking for understanding. OFSTED are looking at what and how much has been remembered and the consistency. We have reported back from the peer review that we have seen evidence of staff and students stopping just short of understanding.
- b) Mr Buckley explained that an HMI (Her Majesty's Inspector) has been supporting Dobwalls towards work for a Good OFSTED outcome and some working practices have been changed as result.
- c) We have had external reviews at Looe and Saltash which were undertaken by Outstanding schools in the area.

37. Discuss the structured curriculum with concept progression

- a) Mr Buckley explained we have found out so much about where misconceptions happen and this has led to changes which have already started to have an impact. We have completed concept reviews in Maths Geography, History, Art and Science. Computing is due in a few weeks' time. During the concept reviews, we take the biggest concept and then track it. We are introducing timelines to schools and discussions have been really valuable and moving forwards, we should look at involving governors in these discussions.

- b) **A Trustee referred to History and the challenges with children's understanding regarding the flow of time and eras and asked to what extent does the Trust tackle this.** Mr Buckley explained the children's misconceptions which includes scheduling time, especially the slow changes over time and also history from different perspectives. We need to look at decolonisation of the curriculum nationally. Mr Buckley advised that children need to understand that history is developmental and history is happening now. Mr Buckley advised that Headteachers are developing a reading aloud scheme and we need to always have an understanding of the purpose of what we are doing which is why curriculum concept reviews are so useful.

38. **Discuss attendance and Elected Home Education (EHE)**

- a) A Trustee noted that there is an increase in EHE students coming into Higher Education. Mr Buckley advised that due to the high numbers involved and reduced funding of LA there are fewer effective regulations surrounding EHE for parents. For the vast majority for children, being in school is more positive than not being in school and the socialisation aspect for children is vital for them. We have ensured that Senior Leaders have implored to parents that the students should stay in our schools and the senior teams have a genuine belief that students should be in school. Some parents will threaten to EHE where there are issues with attendance.
- b) **A Trustee asked if there is any correlation in data for those students that are EHE through from primary to secondary and for those that are only EHE from secondary.** Mr Buckley advised that school phobia and mental health issues are less common in primary and both are a key factor in secondary school students. We are looking at patterns in the Trust wide attendance strategies.
- c) **A Trustee noted that there is a subset of students who cannot cope with a school settings and asked if we can be flexible enough to make the schools an environment that any child can thrive in.** Mr Buckley advised that the Alternative Provision budget has spent over £300k this year and we cannot afford this long term. Attendance figures are also impacted by poor attendance and the reality is that the Local Authority should have appropriate provision in place to support the students who cannot attend a mainstream setting.
- d) **A Trustee asked if there is data on achievement for those in schools versus those students who are EHE.** Mr Buckley advised that the data for EHE is generally really poor and there is increased involvement in crime and the suicide rate is higher although there are also some excellent cases of students being EHE.
- e) **A Trustee noted the use of strategies adopted by autism friendly schools and queried if the schools have taken similar measures to support students.** Mr Buckley advised that in the SEND group, they discussed the number of things a teacher can cope with in a lesson and what overloads them. The response would be to look at all the education plans for a class and what could be done as a standard. An audit of this was completed at the secondary schools and this has been helpful. We ideally need TAs to be working with the most able children which frees up the teacher to support the children which are less able but this is not traditionally how TAs are used. There are a number of children who have complex needs that may be beyond the scope of training and expertise in mainstream education and they are being placed in the wrong provision for them. For our behaviour systems to accommodate this range, Mr Buckley noted the 80/20 rule in which all staff consistently apply predictable policies so all children have an understanding of rules in the school and the consequences of behaviour, but in order to nuance this the school identifies its 20% of staff with the skills required to make reasonable adjustment behind the scenes.
- f) **A Trustee referred to executive function and the sanctions being applied to those children with a diagnosis and queried if there is any flexibility and scaffolding in place for those that can't help their behaviours.** Mr Buckley advised the importance of not labelling children in schools and all the schools have a way of providing lost equipment for example. Children need to develop skills and these need to be actively taught so we will need to look at a pastoral curriculum to teach behaviour which leads to success. Mr Buckley added that detention has lost its context and is now

seen as a punishment rather than spending extra time in school to discuss the learning stemming from the behaviour.

39. **Review of Policies**

- a) None.

40. **Guidance/instructions to LGCs**

- a) There has been a change in process for the Strategic Risk Register where there is a requirement for the Headteacher to share if there has been any change to risks with the LGCs (Local Governing Committees).
- b) Mr Buckley will be discussing “Checking for understanding” in the Learning Link meeting.

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42. **LGC Minutes**

- a) The Clerk advised that the minutes from last term will be circulated by email to Trustees. Link Trustees should take some time to read through their school’s minutes. There were no urgent matters raised at the recent LGC meetings.

43. **Headteacher’s Reports**

- a) A Trustee noted a more consistent format for the Headteacher’s reports. Mr Buckley advised that that staff and student attendance is a priority and highlighted as red on the reports. We have not come to any real conclusion on how we qualify exam results and this is not being picked up within the Headteacher’s reports.
- b) **A Trustee asked what processes are considered as best practice in terms of attendance.** Mr Buckley advised that the EEF have found that each case needs to be dealt with on its own merit. They found that RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rating attendance for parents is useful along with regular follow ups. The schools need to have a range of strategies to employ against each individual student although there are general patterns in groups of children.

44. **Agreements made by email**

- a) None.

45. **Date of next meetings**

30-10-2023, 06-02-2024 and 04-06-2024 all at 6pm.

The Chair thanked Mr Buckley for his extensive knowledge and support. The meeting closed at 7.51pm.

Action Summary	
<p>M34. Consider the Strategic Risk Register in terms of risks assigned to the c) Mr Buckley explained that we discuss data with Trustees and Governors and we address the quality of teaching through the SDPs (School Development Plans). Checking for understanding was found to be an issue at Saltash and work on this has been accelerated. Liskeard have identified that attention on learning and reducing distraction is a high priority. We could add in a mitigation by having an addition school improvement lead in the schools although we have put in an extra curriculum day. A Trustee asked if peer reviews are still being undertaken. Mr Buckley advised that we do have peer reviews and this should be added to the Strategic Risk Register.</p>	<p>Action: D Buckley</p>