



Standards and Curriculum Committee

Minutes:
21st June 2023
5pm

Please note: This meeting was held in person at Lanscove House with the option of TEAMS

Present: Kate Evans (Chair)
Nicky Dunford (CEO) (VIA TEAMS)
Cheryl Mathieson (CM)
Graeme Scott (GS)

In attendance: Rebecca Sear (RS) - Totnes Local Board (LB) Representative
Max Thomas (MT) - Woodleigh LB Representative

Lizzie Lethbridge (DoD) – Director of Education

Minutes: Charlotte Roe (GP)

No	Item	ACTION
1.	Welcome and apologies The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Apologies from Corinna Tigg were received and accepted .	
2.	Declarations of interest The CEO is a trustee of the Bearnas Education Foundation. Graeme Scott is Executive Chairperson of the Mario Framework. Kate Evans is Director for Education of the Good Shepherd Trust, Diocese of Guildford. There were no other declarations of interest lodged.	
3.	Any other business No other business was brought forward.	
4.	Approval of last meeting minutes The minutes of the meeting held on 9 th May 2023 were accepted as a true record and approved by the meeting.	

5.	<p>Matters arising from minutes of 9th May 2023 (not on the agenda)</p> <p>5.5.6 Data of sole PP pupils – this was not available and remains a request / action arising from the committee</p> <p>5.5.6 Y6 aggregated progress scores for SEND and PP pupils – this was not available and remains a request / action arising from the committee</p> <p>5.6 Update on research on possible avenues to evidence phonic mid-year assessments – this was not available and remains a request / action arising from the committee</p> <p><i>For all the items above, the Trustees requested again for the information, explaining that to have a strategic view it was vital to understand the baseline across the Trust to then track the patterns, trends and comparisons with national data. The DoD explained that there was a challenge with SIMS which Andy Keay was trying to resolve with the provider. The DoD added that for phonic assessment it could not be tracked against the curriculum and relied on professional judgement. The Chair requested overviews for Phonics tracking and professional judgements on progress and predictions for outcomes for the mid-year committee meetings, in the same way judgements were made for core subjects. The Trustees raised concerns that the technology was still not working properly and was being given as the reason for a lack of reporting of necessary information. The Trustees added that they were confident that the data for individual schools was scrutinised regularly and leaders had a clear understanding of it, but that an overview of outcomes for the Trust as a whole was necessary.</i></p> <p>5.13 The GP confirmed that the following policies had been approved and were now on the website: - School Complaints/Children with health needs who cannot attend school/Public sector equality statement/School uniform/Missing pupil/Children in Care.</p>	
6.	<p>Focus: SATs: verbal feedback from any administration checks / moderation / First headlines of unvalidated data</p> <p>The DoD reported that 2 Academies had had an administration check and there were no reported issues. 10 Academies across the Trust were moderated. 8 of the school there were no reported issues. 2 schools had not completed; 1 of which was being remoderated as additional evidence was required. A senior teacher was supporting this process.</p> <p><i>The Trustees asked whether there were any key assessment processes (effective practices) to share. The DoD explained how the Academy Heads submit work with the age-related expectations into TEAMS and then the teachers used these to support the moderation for the pupils' work. The DoD added that there were also cross moderation meetings across the Trust to support teachers. Following a question from the Trustees, the DoD explained the lessons learned were around writing and SPAG. The Chairs of the Local Boards both reported that they had supported the SATs moderation in schools and were reassured at how calm and prepared the pupils were. The Trustees asked how the staff managed between over and under preparing pupils. The DoD said that SATs preparation was drip fed over the year and so by May it was second nature for the pupils.</i></p>	
7.	<p>Focus: Verbal feedback on Wellbeing – pupils and staff</p> <p>Three visit notes from Local Governors were circulated before the meeting. The LAC Chairs were invited to share the highlights. It was clear from all visits that Academy Heads' felt supported by the Trust. The Trustees/Local Governors asked the following questions on the reports. <i>Could the academy think about restorative practice being standard practice across staff and pupils as best practice way of working?</i> The DoD explained that restorative practice was part of the relational approach which had been adopted. <i>The Trustees further asked if awareness across the Trust was needed.</i> The DoD explained that the Inclusion Hub were instrumental in sharing the knowledge and it was being done in a three-phase approach. A handful of schools had piloted the scheme along with the Trust's Looked after Children and it was now being rolled out across the Trust. The CEO reported that in Ofsted inspections there were positive comments on the staffs' wellbeing. It was added that the vision was for the relational approach to be part of the ethos and come naturally to all staff and pupils. It was added that relational approach was now part of the ATSIP and ASIP of all the Academies.</p>	

	<p><i>The Trustees asked about the support for SEND, roles of support staff and supporting wellbeing, and the possible perception, noted in the visit reports, that SEND pupils' behaviour and the time taken from support staff, impacted on the wellbeing of other pupils.</i> The DoD explained that there was some unpicking of roles and contracts across the Trust. There were challenging pupils who had a negative effect on staff. Supervision was in place for staff to support them. It was agreed that wellbeing must remain a focus to support staff. The CEO updated the meeting on the staff ratio in Academies to achieve equity across the Trust to ensure that all Academies were supported. The DoD added that in every Academy Head meeting wellbeing was discussed and that the HR Operations Manager, who was the Trust's wellbeing champion also checked in with staff regularly. It was further noted that in appraisals, staff needed to be reminded of the avenues available to support them with their wellbeing.</p> <p><i>Referring to the visit notes, the Trustees asked whether the wide relational approach to behaviour and wellbeing required no sanctions and rewards?</i> The DoD explained that this was not correct, and it was more around language. As a Trust, there was a gradual move away from the hierarchal charts and focussing more on actions and consequences.</p>	
8.	<p>Focus: Quality of Teaching and learning/ATSIP</p> <p>Several reports had been circulated before the meeting by the DoD outlining the process for assessing and supporting the quality of teaching and learning. The Chair invited questions. <i>The Trustees asked who saw the documents?</i> The DoD explained that depending on the level of support required, the EIT had oversight and the Academy Heads facilitated. If an Academy needed more support, then the EIT led. <i>The Trustees commented on the range of methodology across the mentoring process and asked for a further explanation.</i> The DoD explained that the EIT mentored the leaders so they could support their staff through coaching. This was good for culture. <i>The Trustees further asked how a struggling Academy Head was supported?</i> The DoD said that 1:1 coaching was provided however this was invitational based. She added that this process was also offered for new heads moving from the classroom to leadership. <i>The Trustees asked how the Trust afforded releasing staff to enable them to access the support?</i> The DoD said that wherever possible it was done in-house using HLTAs to backfill. If the support was greater then, the Trust provided the financial support using floating teachers. <i>The Trustees asked about the Learning Support Challenge days and how the necessary aspects of provision were quality assured and verified?</i> The DoD explained that an exemplar of the day's timetable was shared with the Academy Head before the day. This showed what the EIT would like to see and gave the Head a chance to make suggestions. The EIT led the day. If a return visit was required, then there might be a deeper dive which was determined by the EIT. The triad meetings foci were determined by the Academy Heads.</p> <p><i>The Trustees asked if there were examples of sustained impact around improving teaching standards.</i> The DoD outlined examples of how the process had worked and how teachers had now become a valuable part of the Trust community. She added that the EIT tried to match the personalities when setting up a mentoring and coaching partnerships.</p>	
9.	<p>Focus: Attendance</p> <p>An attendance report had been circulated before the meeting; questions had been raised by the Trustees which had been addressed by the Trust's Attendance Officer. The Trustees asked the GP to thank the Attendance Officer on their behalf for a comprehensive and detailed report and response to the questions. The Trustees discussed term time holidays and the actions. It was noted that the use of available sanctions, such as Penalty Notices was not consistent across the Trust. The Trustees asked the GP to confirm with the Attendance Officer that in the event of holidays being taken during term time then a fine must be issued. <i>The Trustees asked about persistent absences (not including medical needs) and what other sanctions were being used?</i> The CEO reported that Academy Heads were directed into the EWO service which the Trust had purchased. There were good systems in place to address absences below 95% however some Academy Heads needed to be encouraged to adopt a more robust approach with parents. It was noted by the meeting that being in school provided</p>	GP

	<p>consistency for a pupil, so attendance was important. <i>Following a further question from a Trustee</i>, it was noted that being late would mean an absence for that session. The CEO added to support pupils and parents with this, in some cases free breakfast club was offered; this was proving to be highly successful.</p> <p>The Chair asked for attendance for PPG and SEND pupils to be carried forward as Matters Arising at the next meeting.</p>	GP
10.	<p>Local board reports</p> <p><i>Further to the visit notes circulated from the Local Boards it was noted that a question around the benefits of purchasing power through the Trust to improve value for money had been raised.</i> The CEO reported that as a Trust, the decision was to not pool the GAG funding to ensure that each Academy was viable, though a portion was taken into the central budget line; this was based on a formula. The CEO reported that when ordering for supplies, especially for the beginning of the academic year, it was done centrally which ensured substantial savings. It was noted that the PTFA do support schools but not on the basics. The CEO added that for the following year budgets were stretched due to staffing costs and the government expecting schools to fund the pay rises out of existing budgets.</p>	
11.	<p>Action Plans</p> <p>The Trustees reviewed the Action Plans and Part II was taken.</p>	
12.	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>GS reported that following the extensive reports circulated for the S&C meeting in May 2023 there little to update the meeting. Safeguarding was still a focus across the Trust with monthly updates from the Trust's safeguarding Lead. GS reported that he had met with the Trust Safeguarding Lead and Governance Professional to look at the links at Trust, Local Governance and Academy level to ensure that there was a cohesive approach.</p>	
13.	<p>Trust Risk Register - Evaluation of risk related to quality of provision and standards and curriculum</p> <p>It was noted that the DCEO had delivered basic training to the Academies and was now helping individual schools to ensure consistency. Trustees would now have oversight.</p>	
14.	<p>Strategic Plan</p> <p>The Strategic Plan for S&C Committee was circulated by the Chair before the meeting. The meeting reviewed the plan together to consider and agree the progress. It was noted that across the plan all the actions had been started and were at different stages of completion. The CEO said that she felt that the S&C meetings were more productive and professional and welcomed that more staff members were being invited to join the meetings to share their expertise. It was further noted that having Trustees on the committee with clear school improvement expertise was resulting in more effective meetings. The challenge was the level of scrutiny and requested information and ensuring that the Committee remained strategic. The Trustees reiterated that a School on a Page summary would support the meeting to be up to date with the Trust's progress. It was proposed and agreed that the EIT would be held to account to improve the data that came into Standards and Curriculum Committee. The meeting also discussed the reporting mechanism for the LACs and the Chair of the LACs said they felt that the changes would improve LAC governor engagement and sense of impact.</p>	
15.	<p>Policies</p> <p>15.1 Relationships education policy - The policy was circulated before the meeting; questions were raised by Trustees and there were minor amendments on this policy. It was also confirmed that the policy would go out to parents for consultation. The DoD agreed to facilitate this. The meeting agreed the policy with the amendments.</p> <p>15.2 Online safety policy (deferred to Autumn)</p> <p>15.3 Positive handling policy - The policy was circulated before the meeting; questions were raised by Trustees and there were minor amendments on this policy. The meeting agreed to recommend it to Board of Trustees with the amendments.</p> <p>15.4 School behaviour policy (deferred to Autumn)</p> <p>15.5 Statement of procedures for dealing with allegation of abuse against staff policy - The policy was circulated before the meeting; questions were raised by Trustees and</p>	

	<p>there were minor amendments on this policy. The meeting agreed to recommend it to the Board of Trustees with the amendments.</p> <p>A LAC Chair asked the meeting whether the Trust do a stress test to ensure there was no systemic adverse equalities impact. The meeting agreed that this was important and there was a discussion on how that could be done. The Chair said that she would add it to the S&C Committee Strategic Plan and asked for this to be raised as Matters Arising for the next meeting. CM asked for this to be added to the Board of Trustees agenda.</p>	GP GP
15.	<p>Evaluation of governance impact</p> <p>It was agreed that this had been discussed at length under item 14</p>	