

Standards & Curriculum Committee

Meeting – Part I Minutes

Date/Time	28 April 2021 5pm	Location	Conducted using the online platform MS Teams due to the Covid-19 pandemic and social distancing rules. The meeting was also recorded.
-----------	----------------------	----------	---

Attendees	Initials		Attendees	Initials		
Jane Collings	JCO	Chair	Nicola Dunford	ND	CEO	
Dominic Course	DC	Trustee and interim Chair for the Moorland Schools	Fiona Walters	FW	Trustee	

Apologies	Initials
None	

Absent Apology	without	Initials
None		

In Attendance	Initial	(anyone who is not a Trustee)
Rachel Hill	RH	Clerk
Sarah Clarke	SC/ ATSIL	Academy Trust School Improvement Lead
Matt Matthew	TBM	Trust Business Manager (part)
Sarah Cox	SC	Trustee
Jo Carter	KF	Woodleigh Representative
Lynda Cooper	LC	Newton & Teign Representative
Cat Radford	CR	Totnes Representative
Corinna Tigg	CT	Raleigh Representative

Minutes to
Attendees
Absent
School Website

	Agenda	Led by
	Welcome and Apologies	Chair
	Declaration of Business Interests	Chair
	Minutes of the previous meeting	Chair
	Digital Learning Strategy & Vision March 2021-24	TBM/CEO
1	Matters Arising	Chair
2	Local Board Reports and Planned Summer Monitoring Cycle	LB Chairs
3	ATSIL Summary Report	ATSIL
4	CEO Report	CEO
5	Blended/Remote Learning Update	CEO/ATSIL
6	Curriculum Updates	All
7	Safeguarding, Pupil Premium and SEND	Chair
8	PP/SEND, Sports Premium and Catch-Up Funds	CEO/ATSIL
9	Trust Risk Register ES&A Section	CEO/Chair
10	Policies	All

Standards & Curriculum Committee

Details of discussion	Action
<p><u>Welcome and Apologies:</u></p> <p>The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting. Sarah Cox, Trustee and Matt Matthew the Trust Business Manager were introduced to the committee and thanked for attending.</p>	
<p><u>Declaration of Business Interests:</u></p> <p>The CEO and Dominic Course (DC) are Directors of South Dartmoor Academy during the closure of this empty MAT. The CEO is a Trustee of the Bearnes Education Foundation.</p>	
<p><u>Part 1 Minutes of the meeting dated 27.01.2021:</u></p> <p>The Part 1 minutes of the meeting dated 27.01.2021 were confirmed as a true and correct record and will be signed at the next face to face meeting.</p>	Action Chair/ Clerk
<p><u>Digital Learning Strategy 2021-2024</u></p> <p>The Digital Learning Strategy 2021-24 was circulated prior to the meeting and is filed in SharePoint. The TBM and CEO reported.</p> <p>The Digital Learning Strategy was based on experience gained over the previous sixteen months and covers the financial requirements and digital learning vision required to ensure satisfactory growth for the Trust over the next three years.</p> <p>The connectivity for the Trust's schools is a limiting factor. Two schools, Yeoford and Ilsington, have been successful in gaining funding through the Rural Gigabit Connectivity (RGC) programme to improve internet connectivity. Hennock had been proposed to the RGC programme but a desktop cost exercise was conducted and found it was cost prohibitive. The use of Air Band had also been considered. One school, Hennock, already has this arrangement but their internet speeds remain sub requirements.</p> <p>The CEO continued that families and staff are reliant on the internet to find research information. The TBM advised that the schools with the least IT and connectivity provision have become the priority schools for IT equipment. These schools are Cheriton Bishop followed by Stoke Gabriel and Hennock. IT provision needs to be balanced with capital costs.</p> <p>The need for the Trust to be pragmatic and move quickly as technical developments occur has been noted. Broadclyst Primary School, part of the Cornerstone Trust, has been held up as the exemplar in the region. The Trust has spoken directly to the Microsoft Education Team who has suggested devices, provided quotes and training advice.</p> <p>The dependence on trained teachers and/or connectivity and how these aspects could be aligned to enable the success of the strategy has been discussed. The TBM advised that teacher training could be supplied by Microsoft if they were chosen. The CEO added that equipment should only be purchased if it could be used in the school and that an IT champion for each Academy should be developed. The Trust has built up resources in terms of recorded lessons and BBC Bite Size but should be prepared for another lockdown. Schools could deliver online on snow days, if a child was sick and also for home-learning in order to continue the educational progress of pupils. Flexible working hours for staff is being developed and the Trust will be researching how online learning can be used to enable this. Current data is showing that pupils have maintained progress and haven't lost ground from January 2021 through online teaching.</p> <p>The TBM added that the Trust needs to provide the tools for staff to deliver this action plan. The Standards & Curriculum committee have a major part in the decision making process and teaching and learning aspect.</p> <p>The strategy is programmed to commence September 2021. The option of leasing IT equipment has been considered. The TBM advised that the Trust could only use an operating lease. The TBM will look at the DfE framework for costs on lease of equipment and provide the Finance & General Purposes committee with details.</p>	

Standards & Curriculum Committee

<p><i>LC asked about the Strategic Partnership and if this represented Microsoft.</i> The TBM advised that the Trust's strategic partners are Limbtec.</p> <p><i>JC advised that she would keep the committee updated on any Air Band progress in the local community. JC also brought up an issue raised at her Local Board meeting about blue light from IT equipment potentially damaging children's eyes.</i> The CEO responded that the part of the strategy being discussed was about the kit. The next development will involve the Academy Heads and be about the teaching and training. Health and wellbeing will come into this next part.</p> <p><i>DC asked if a there could be a time in the future where each child would have their own IT equipment.</i> The TBM responded that in September 2021 each Year 6 pupil should have a device. These devices could then be devolved down to other years.</p> <p><i>DC suggested that it could be useful to involve parental pressure to acquire internet connectivity.</i> The TBM advised that it has been noted that internet connectivity can sometimes be poor due to equipment within the schools not being up to standard.</p> <p>The Chair asked if the CEO and TBM could bring the strategy back to the committee when it is in delivery. This was agreed.</p> <p>The TBM left the meeting at this point.</p>	Action CEO/ TBM
<p>1 <u>Matters Arising from meeting dated 27.01.2021:</u></p> <p>1.1 <u>Item 2. Summary Report for Local Boards to use when reporting to the Standards & Curriculum (S&C) meeting.</u> The ATSIL reported that this has been actioned and is now on Teams.</p> <p>1.2 <u>Item 4. Pupil Premium Students</u> The CEO reported that the Trust must now evidence actions and how it links to research evidence. Becky Humphreys from the Inclusion Hub has been working on this. An Academy Head meeting to focus on PP will be planned in September 2021.</p> <p>1.3 <u>Item 3. Local Board Feedback to Board of Trustees.</u> The Chair advised that the feedback taken to the most recent meeting of Trustees was about Blended Learning. The Digital Learning Strategy is in part a result of this feedback. The CEO added that when the strategy was taken to the F&GP committee the finances were robustly challenged by Trustees.</p> <p>1.4 <u>Risk Register</u> Please see agenda item 9 below.</p>	
<p>2 <u>Local Board Reports:</u></p> <p>The following concerns were raised by Local Board Chairs for the attention of the Board of Trustees at their May 24 meeting.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It was noted the Inclusion Hub provides exemplary practice but only has the same capacity as when the LINK had six schools. Now there are 15 schools will it be expanded? 2. Concerns were raised over limited provision for Gifted and Talented pupils. 3. Concerns were raised over the 0 -25 DCC Children's' Services and their lack of action after Section 47 and MASH referrals. 4. There have been GDPR breaches by the 0-25 team. 5. Local Boards are keen for Trustees to write to Devon County with the concerns raised in points three and four above. 6. Local Boards requested Trustees ask for a staff survey to be conducted following the two parent surveys already undertaken. 	

Standards & Curriculum Committee

	<p>7. Concerns were raised over the workload of Academy Heads who also had the SENDCo role. One Academy Head was SENDCo of two schools. SENDCos are also required to have the SENDCo award within three years. Local Boards stated that Academy Heads have limited capacity for this role. https://schoolsweek.co.uk/budget-cuts-push-heads-to-double-up-as-sencos/</p> <p>8. Local Boards are keen to see volunteers and governors return to schools as they play a vital role. It was noted that they could return in a COVID secure manner with Lateral Flow Tests and increased vaccination.</p> <p>9. Local Boards asked how complaints were monitored by the Board of Trustees and how any themes were identified.</p> <p>10. The Standards & Curriculum committee were asked to strategically commit to diversifying the history curriculum in relation to Black History and BLM.</p> <p>11. It would be useful to gather some evidence of how the Link Academy Trust has worked effectively through the pandemic in case there is a general review of MATs in the future.</p>	
3	<p><u>ATSIL Summary Report:</u></p> <p>Sarah Clarke, the Academy Trust School Improvement Lead (ATSIL) asked for any questions raised by her report filed in SharePoint.</p> <p><i>CR asked for clarification about Local Boards monitoring risks and asked when this would occur.</i> The CEO responded that when LBs visit schools they are there as a critical friend. The ATSIL agreed that it was not an expectation of LBs to monitor risks.</p> <p><i>The Chair added that she was impressed with the work that Local Boards were doing as the eyes and ears of the Trust. The improvement has been exponential since working with the ATSIL.</i></p> <p>SC added for the record, that her experience of the induction of the Moorland Hub to the Link Academy Trust has been a very positive experience and thanked DC for Chairing in the interim. The method will be used as a model going forward. The Chair added that she was impressed with how the Raleigh Hub has developed in a short time. The CEO added that SC's work with the EIT has provided a consistency and quality which has provided a Trust picture. The conduit between the S&C committee and the Trust Board has now taken shape.</p>	

Standards & Curriculum Committee

4	<p><u>CEO Verbal Summary Report:</u></p> <p>Morichard Bishop has a conversion date of the 1 October 2021. The Trust meets with the Schools Organisation and Governance Group for the Diocese on 5 May 2021. On the 25 May it goes to the Head Teachers Board who will confirm or otherwise whether Morichard Bishop can convert. There will most likely be conditions attached. The Trust's governance structure now is clear and this will assist the process. The Membership operation will be the next development project. Both Senior Leaders at Morichard Bishop will be leaving in July 2022 and at this point the Trust will begin recruitment for these roles ensuring appropriate overlap with the Head Teacher. <i>DC asked whether the joining date could be 1 September 2021.</i> The CEO replied that this had been discussed but it does not make it easier in this case as the Trust is already in a management partnership with Morichard Bishop. The potential issues around School House at Morichard Bishop were discussed. The DfE have now given an undertaking that once the current tenants leave School House the Trust will be allowed to take School House on.</p> <p>Blended Learning will be maintained and taken forward by the Digital Learning Strategy & Vision. The aim is to start the strategy September 2021. The next step of the strategy is to discuss and develop the learning aspect.</p> <p>At the Ofsted Briefing with the staff the fact that Ofsted will recommence Visits on 4 May 2021 was discussed. There are five schools possibly six who will be visited. These are the schools who joined the Trust eighteen months ago. This is usual Ofsted practice. There is an emphasis on digital/online learning and how children have progressed over lockdowns. The Academy Heads are currently writing the chronologies behind phases one, two and three of the Blended Learning Plan and collecting quotes and examples. Safeguarding will also be scrutinised. Peer on peer and child on child abuse will be looked at. The Trust's practice has to be watertight and needs to react and show the follow up. Examples of good practice are being identified by Heads. <i>The Chair noted that Secondary Schools will be visited after half-term. Summer Ofsted visits are not going to be graded. Ofsted will be looking at governance and 'ensuring effective contributions to leader's actions in these current circumstances'. Local Boards and Trustees are invited to Ofsted visits (as many as possible). The Trust needs to be clear about how they have supported the challenges which have turned to achievements over the last 12 months. Ofsted will also be looking at vulnerable children and how the Trust has monitored the recovery curriculum.</i></p> <p>Learn Support Challenge Days are being booked in and it would be useful if governors could attend.</p> <p>Academy Trust Strategic Improvement Priorities have been discussed in depth and the report will be forwarded to the S&C committee once finalised. How Digital Learning has an impact on all subjects is being looked at. The Trust is also looking at CPD across all areas. This will develop pathways for governors. The same will be developed for NQT through to all teaching levels. This will link closely with budgeting and appraisals. Mental Health and Awareness will also be developed. The report will then go to Academy Heads and they will look at what they need to do in their school to create a standard.</p> <p>The Inclusion Hub was discussed which is at capacity. Training up will take place amongst the Inclusion Hub staff. The Hub is funded by PP funds and SEND requires careful monitoring. The Hub has been invaluable during the past 12 months. <i>The Totnes Chair noted that the concept of putting the Inclusion Hub Lead role as a Leadership role means that it is about developing PP and SEND in a cultural way rather than outsourcing and it therefore becomes about developing staff which is excellent practice. The Woodleigh Chair offered her support in any way to the Inclusion Hub as her deep desire is for all children to start on a level playing field in life and that is what the Hub is all about.</i> The CEO thanked the Woodleigh Chair for her kind offer.</p> <p>The CEO continued, advising that she was currently working with the TBM on a Growth Strategy for the Trust. This is to prepare the Link for potential growth and the possibility of being approached by small schools who could need the Trust's support in the future.</p>	
5	<p><u>Blended/Remote Learning Update:</u></p> <p>Please refer to the CEO's report above.</p>	

Standards & Curriculum Committee

6	<p><u>Curriculum Developments:</u></p> <p>The CEO reported that the Recovery Curriculum had been set as soon as the date for schools to reopen had been released. The best possible curriculum for children returning to school had been discussed and a short term curriculum based around science was developed. This enabled staff to gently monitor and assess pupils and their needs on their return. Pupils were set work which could be analysed afterwards rather than being tested. Staff discussions then took place and it was agreed that it was important for children to get back into school life, meet with their friends and talk without pressure.</p> <p>The ATSL added that staff were exhausted by the Easter break.</p> <p>Blended Learning is still deeply bedded within Phase 3 of the plan which was discussed at the last session. Students are now back on track with their curriculum, focusing heavily on core subjects. A data drop has been taken with the first data coming through just before Easter. The percentage of children at Age Related in every subject is down but it has not regressed since the last data drop. Some SEND pupils have done really well and this could be because they came into school during lockdowns and had a teacher who gave them bespoke learning and one to one teaching. There remains a mountain to climb in terms of progress for all students. There are approximately 40 percent of pupils two levels behind which is significant when pre-pandemic it would have been expected to be around 20 percent. The difference between the data gathered during the first lockdown compared to the smaller improved change in the second lockdown is testament to the Trust's strategy around remote learning. However, the Trust clearly has significant work to do to improve the results. Strategies will need to be employed to help the children bounce back. It will be interesting to compare the Trust's data to the national picture. The CEO continued that as the Trust is relying heavily on teacher assessment moderation is taking place. <i>The Chair noted that one key aspect of partnership is moderation.</i></p> <p><i>The Chair asked whether the S&C committee could strategically commit to diversifying the history curriculum in relation to Black History and BLM.</i> The CEO agreed adding that looking at a globalised picture was important, particularly in the rural area that we live in. <i>DC suggested that the Trust could undertake a project for Black History Month.</i> The CEO advised that schools teach current affairs and this was important in the Trust's Citizen Approach. Morchard Bishop school has close links with a school in Uganda. Cheriton Bishop has been twinned with a school in Tanzania.</p>	
7	<p><u>Safeguarding, PP and SEND monitoring meeting:</u></p> <p>The Chair advised that she had had a Trust Safeguarding meeting and drew the committee's attention to her report which had been circulated prior to the meeting and is filed in SharePoint.</p> <p>The helicopter view of Safeguarding, Pupil Premium and SEND had been discussed. The key aspects of speech and language, SENDco training, concerns about workload and bottom up focus and writing were discussed. It was also noted that the Trust has new responsibilities to report on the website.</p> <p>The CEO added that a Spring Safeguarding Report received from Alex Waterman had been placed in SharePoint for the committee's attention and asked the committee to acknowledge the numbers of SEND pupils at Bearnas compared to other schools.</p> <p><i>The Totnes Chair asked if Local Board governors could read the Safeguarding report.</i> The CEO advised that as long as the report remained Part II within the individual Local Board this could be done.</p>	

Standards & Curriculum Committee

8	<p><u>Safeguarding, Pupil Premium and SEND Sports Premium and Catch-Up Fund:</u></p> <p><i>The Chair asked how the Trust was delivering National Tutoring programme . The CEO reported that the National Tutoring programme is not used by the Link Schools and tutoring is undertaken by Academy staff. The Trust is trying to ensure that there is Wrap Around Care in all schools. The Trust is looking at delivering the core subjects to the highest degree through Forest Schools. The Chair of Raleigh Federation asked if a parent knew the National Tutoring programme was available and approached an Academy Head about it, how would that be dealt with. The CEO agreed that this should be discussed by E/AHs to ensure they knew how to respond but would suggest that evidence should be looked at around the success of programmes such as this. Additionally, there are no tutors in our area that are available. The Chair added that most of the training was online.</i></p> <p>The Chair asked for an update on the progress of the Sports Premium at the next meeting. In particular what the impact of the fund has been and how it was used during lockdown.</p>	<p>Action CEO</p> <p>Agenda Item June</p>
9	<p><u>Trust Risk Register:</u></p> <p>The CEO advised that she had updated the Educational Standards & Achievement section of the Risk Register, dates have been altered and reasoning behind the changes have been made. No key points from the Chairs of the Local Boards were fed back on the Risk Register as posted in SharePoint. <i>DC commented on attainment and age related expectation. The Trust understands that this will be down. DC asked if there was a feeling that age related expectation is going to be recalibrated nationally when the national figures are to hand.</i> The CEO explained that in the main part this had been left the same and some had been inched down one because this last lockdown had proven that the Trust could maintain the progress as it was using online. What needs to happen now is for the children to be moved as far up as possible without it being a traumatic experience. Staff are looking to see which children can be moved to age related from one level off. Those that are two levels off will be encouraged to reach one level off age related at the least. As the Trust has incorporated more digital online learning there should be less impact of lockdowns in the future and a recovery picture should become visible. It was agreed that the Clerk would download the changes onto a pdf and for the committee to compare with the pdf currently in SharePoint and for any comments to be sent to the CEO or DC. <i>DC asked if a date had been set for when the individual school risk registers would be available for local governors and Trustees.</i> The CEO advised that she had requested these were drawn up last term. The ATSIL agreed and advised a date had not been set. The CEO agreed to follow this up and send them to DC.</p>	<p>Action Clerk</p> <p>Action CEO</p>
10	<p><u>Policies to be reviewed and recommended to Board of Trustees for approval:</u></p> <p>10.1 SEND Policy It was agreed that LC, DC and the Chair would work on changes to the policy. Subject to changes it was agreed that the policy was reviewed and should be forwarded to the May meeting of Trustees for approval.</p> <p>10.2 Developing Relational Behaviour and Policy As it stands at present this is more of a paper than a policy. It was agreed that the CEO would take this back to the originators and ask for it to be produced as a policy. It was agreed that it was an excellent document but now needs to be developed in a teacher, child, parent friendly manner. In the meantime the Trust will continue to use the Behaviour Policies on the school websites.</p>	<p>Action Chair/ LC</p> <p>Action CEO</p>

Date of next meetings			
Date/Time	16 June 2021	Location	Online

These minutes were produced from the recording as the minutes taken at the time of the meeting were sadly lost (they didn't save).