

**Standards and Curriculum Committee**

**Minutes**

19<sup>th</sup> March 2024

5pm

**This meeting was held on TEAMS**

**Present:** Kate Evans (Chair)  
Nicky Dunford (CEO)  
Cheryl Mathieson (CM)  
Graeme Scott (GS)  
Christine Cottle (CC)

**In attendance:** Rebecca Sear (RS) - Totnes Local Board (LB) Representative  
Max Thomas (MT) – Mid Devon LB Representative  
Oliver Heathman (OH) - Moorland Hub LB Representative  
Corinna Tigg (CT) – East Devon Hub LB Representative

Lizzie Lethbridge (DoE) – Director of Education  
Sarah Clarke (SC) – Director of School Improvement  
Andy Keay (AK) – Director of Standards and Outcomes

**Minutes:** Charlotte Roe (GP)

No	Item	ACTION
1.	<b>Welcome and apologies</b> The meeting opened with a welcome from the Chair. Apologies were received and <b>accepted</b> from Graeme Scott.	
2.	<b>Declarations of interest</b> 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.	
3.	<b>Any other business</b> There was no any other business brought forward.	
4.	<b>Approval of last meeting minutes</b> The minutes of the meeting held on 30 <sup>th</sup> January 2024 were formally approved as a true record. The Chair signed accordingly.	
5.	<b>Matters arising from minutes of 30<sup>th</sup> January 2024 (not on the agenda)</b> 5.7 Attendance for the PPG and SEN children - <i>The Trustees asked for an update on the attendance for the PPG and SEN</i> – AK said that it was not possible to track the attendance for PPG from 2022 onwards. Tracking of attendance was not under the identification of PPG. It was agreed that this would be different in future with the new system. GP agreed to discuss this further with the Trust’s Attendance Officer. <i>(Following the meeting the GP contacted the Trust’s Attendance Officer. Was advised that it had to be done by each individual school so was a manual exercise. It was hoped that the new system would allow this to be done centrally)</i>	GP
6.	<b>Focus:</b> Review of nationally reported data on EYFS, Y1 Phonic check, Y4 multiplication check, KS1 SATS and KS2 SATS, SEND and PPG analysis <b>including</b> Broad overview of other groups on their progress and expectations to targets	

Andy Keay gave a presentation on the headline data for 2024 predicted outcomes and Academy Comparisons 2023.

	National %	2023 Comparison %	2024 Comparison %
EYFS	67.2	70	77
KS1 Phonics	79	86	80
KS1 Reading	68	69	79
KS1 Writing	60	62	72
KS1 Maths	70	70	80
KS2 Reading	73	75	75
KS2 Writing	71	64	69
KS2 Maths	73	69	72

The questions and comments made: -

- SATS for KS1 would continue however not reported to support the baseline tracking for progress. The Trustees said that the improvements would support the outcomes at KS2. *The Trustees asked if reading, writing, maths combined data would continue.* AK confirmed that this would be the practice to allow a tracking point. *Following a question about the current data,* AK said that the reading, writing and maths combined for the end of Key Stage 2 was predicted to be around 70%.
- The DoE added that the improvements in outcomes reflected the work of the EIT around phonics and Maths supporting the weaker schools.
- It was noted that the comparisons were on 16 schools however with 3 more schools joining the 2024 data might become skewed.
- Across the Trust the SEN children and pivotal children were targeted to ensure that this group attained strong outcomes.
- *How does the EYFS outcomes compare with Devon?* AK said that he would find out this information. The Trustees said that in future it would be helpful to not only make comparisons nationally but also include comparisons with Devon.
- The Trustees commented that there was a big gap from PPG with mainstream – IDSRs. Internally the schools knew what their progress scores were. The Trustees said that it was important to track the attainment and progress of the PPG pupils. AK said that he had met with every AH over the Trust and it was clear that the AHs were skilled and fluent at knowing their individual data and progress.
- *Why were only Year 6 teachers receiving moderation training and not all the teachers?* AK explained that logistically that was not possible and so the decision was to target the Year 6 teachers to prepare them for the expectations of external moderation.

EIT updated on the new data system – Andy Keay reported that moving forward all the schools were moving over to SIMS Group. This was a new system that used information from SIMS to populate a dashboard across the Trust. This new system will allow the data to be tracked in more detail.

The meeting then addressed the questions that had been raised by the Local Advisory Committees (LAC)

- *One LAC asked for clarification around the PP funding for 2024-25 being allocated centrally rather than allocated locally?* The CEO explained that in previous years there was a small pot allocated to each school regardless of how many PPG pupils were in the school. So to be fairer, this year it would be done differently, based on a tier system depending on how many PPG pupils were in each school. The CEO agreed to share the paper with the LAC Chairs to take back to their LACs.
- *Clarity around SEND data as high numbers on SEND register was there consistency across the Trust?* The Chair said this was a strong question and asked for it to be raised at the next S&C meeting where SEND was the focus.
- *Could LAC's have national attainment data?* AK said that this could be facilitated through the GP.

CEO

AK/GP

7. **Focus: Progress on the ASIP and ATSIP**

The DoE and Sarah Clarke addressed the meeting. The presentation slides were circulated before the meeting. The following comments/questions were made:-

- The DoE informed the meeting that the tracking data informed the ATSIP. The approach of the ATSIP had developed over the past few years. The current strands foci were oracy, relational approach and curriculum implementation. The EIT planned 4 years ahead. The AHs were included in the planning. The DoE illustrated how the plan was implemented. It was added that the EIT ensured that there was a consistent approach across the Trust. The milestone approach had now been adopted which had made a difference on how to monitor the impact. The data was now showing that the School Improvement offer had impacted positively on the outcomes for the pupils. The DoE illustrated the 3 different tiers of support offered depending on the need of the school. A communication model had been developed to ensure that the information was shared robustly and appropriately.
- The Trustees said that it was encouraging that the RAG rating was predominantly green on the operational and strategic systems. *The Trustees asked what was the impact on the pupils and the validation on the quality of provision?* The DoE said that this would be a strong next-step and it was **agreed** to address this at the next EIT meeting.
- *The Trustees asked about the SEN children and the impact especially as the Trust disadvantage pupils was a focus?* The DoE said that these pupils were included under the ATSIP umbrella and the impact.
- Sarah Clarke outlined the writing audit which was to be the following academic year's focus across the Trust. Writing had become a focus as the data was showing that it was weaker. In the first instance the EIT wanted to understand the actual position of the writing across the Trust, so the response was targeted and meaningful, resulting in improved progress for the pupils. There was a robust audit of 6 schools of the Trust of varying abilities this enabled the Improvement Team to put in an informed plan. The missing part was around intent and sequencing. Grammar was being planned out, but it was not consistent. There were some positive aspects highlighted during the audit. The proposed response which allowed the schools to develop and deliver a bespoke provision ensuring a clear curriculum progression was shared with the EIT. A training strategy was identified with whole Trust training planned to include some input from a recognised author.
- *The Trustees asked about what the intended outcomes were?* SC agreed to develop a model that could identify the exact progress.

It was noted that across the LACs the governors had reviewed and discussed with the Academy Heads (AH) about their ASIPs. Predominantly the feedback was positive with all AHs reporting that all ASIP targets would be met in line with their plans.

8. **Local Advisory Committee**

8.1 The LAC Chairs were invited to bring forward any further questions or comments from the LAC meetings.

- *What was the ongoing strategic recruitment plan for the Trust (particularly in view of the general difficulty in recruiting)?* The CEO said that there was a workforce strategy group who were working hard to identify more efficient ways of advertising. The group had also been looking at job descriptions. The Trust were trying to head hunt. CM added that retention was also a focus within the group to build an informed understanding of why staff remained in the Trust – making the Trust an employer of choice. *The meeting asked whether the Trust linked with colleges and universities?* The CEO said that the Trust do have students from various local colleges and universities to encourage strong links. The meeting discussed other ways of engaging with further education.
- *Central communications had not been as strong as local school communications and asked how it could be improved?* Responding to the example given by the LAC Chair, the CEO said that as a central team it was felt that the decision had been positive but would be mindful in future. The CEO said that she was tasked to deliver the more difficult news, leaving the Academy Heads communication with the parents to be more positive.
- *The Trustees asked that as attainment was low in one of the schools would it be more insightful to have a greater focus on progress?* The Trustees did add though

that this school should be congratulated on the best attendance of their LAC – at or above current national average.

- Were any other schools across the Trust experiencing a low intake of school dinners/catering issue? The Trustees asked for more information about this. The CEO said that this pertinent to one school and was not across the Trust. The other LAC Chairs confirmed that there had not been any report of concerns around the school dinners.
- Some parents/staff were dismayed at the loss of the early finish at the end of each term and if it was going to be reinstated. The CEO said that it would not be reinstated.
- “Was the Trust vision theologically rooted?” The DoE reported that the V&V was under review currently and that Sharon Lord (RE Lead) was included in the review. There would be a strong theological rooted narrative running alongside the final vision.
- **Behavioural and Relational Approach** - 'Are we confident that the support staff had received and were culturally demonstrating the approach, with specific reference to playground times?' The DoE said that the modules were being delivered with all staff over the next two years. As it got rolled out, it was expected that there would be more confidence that the support staff were delivering a strong relational approach. The Inclusion Hub was leading the initiative and monitoring the impact. The DoE said that she would highlight this observation with the Inclusion Hub for monitoring.
- **Private SEND diagnostics**- The diagnostics were not allowing for a multiagency approach. Potentially leading to a professional trust breakdown between parents and teachers. “Was there a trend across the Trust?” “Were they recognised at the schools?” “Did the schools agree with the diagnosis?” “What was the impact of private diagnosis?” “What was the parental expectation once a diagnosis was made?” The CEO said that this was an issue for the Trust. The Trust want to do their best for the pupils and so were putting in robust interventions themselves because the service from Devon was not acceptable. The Trust currently had a substantial Inclusion Hub, accessed MAST and offered therapies and intervention. The CEO added there was a plan to develop the provision further to help meet the need of the pupils with additional needs. The Trustees commented that the waiting lists for Devon SEN services were untenable and said that as a Trust if EYFS SEND could be the focus it would then support the pupils across their school life.
- **SENDCo systems in individual schools**- “Was there an equitable approach to SENDCO assignment across the Trust?’ The CEO said the approach was as fair as possible. The SENDCo qualification was hard. Every school had a SENDCo provision; the DoE said the EIT would review the transparency and strategic overview across the Trust to allay the questions.
- **Pupil Wellbeing surveys**- “Could there be a “questions” bank that AHs could contribute towards?” The DoE agreed that this would be looked at AH meeting.

DoE

DoE

DoE

8.2 Update on the Local Governors’ Skills Audit and Mid-Year LAC procedure review. The GP reported that the local governors’ skill audit had been completed. There had been 15 responses. It was felt that the audit was too complex especially for the newer governors. Going forward the actions were to improve the understanding of roles/strategic priorities, risk register and engagement with stakeholders. The GP added that the next audit format would also be changed.

The Mid-Year LAC procedure review was circulated with the agenda. The Trustees asked for their thanks to be passed on for those who had completed the survey adding that the verbatim responses clearly took time and were thorough and useful as a result. It was noted that there were helpful suggestions for how governance and the inter-action between Trustees and LACs could be improved.

The Trustees said that the ‘blinkering’ effect of such long agendas for visits was very helpful – adding that there was a need to avoid overloading the agendas to allow flexibility for other

	<p>emerging issues to be discussed, and to hear about ‘matters arising’ from previous visits. <i>The Trustees asked whether a 2-year cycle would help?</i>  It was noted that S&amp;C were not receiving the detail that the LACs think.  <i>The Trustees asked about the comments about ‘occasional visits from Trustees’ and asked what might this look like?</i> The Trustees asked the Chair of LACs and the GP to discuss this further with the LACs.  The GP reported that at the next Governance Meeting after Easter, the team were going to look at the responses and consider how their practice could be improved to support the LACs. This would then be circulated to the LACs and Trustees. The GP added that some of the points made had already been highlighted and were being implemented such as training for the LACs, bios of the Governors in each LAC and making changes to the S&amp;C Annual Planner to include new foci and look at timings such as data.  8.3 Review 2024/2025 S&amp;C Annual Planner – The Chair explained that she had met with the GP to review the planner. It was noted that some additional focus had been added and that some had moved to bi-annual. The Chair asked the meeting to review the paper and bring any questions/comments to the next meeting.</p>	<p>LAC Chairs/ GP</p> <p>Whole meeting</p>
9.	<p><b>Action Plans</b>  Action plans from previous term to be presented to Trustees to include progression. No support plan reviews had been circulated before the meeting. The DoE said that were no concerns. All the actions plans were making good progress against their milestones. The DoE agreed to circulate the action plans at the next meeting.</p>	DoE
10.	<p><b>Due Diligence</b>  It was noted that the due diligence process was available through a MS planner. It was noted that all the Committees had a responsibility to review the areas that were pertinent to the committees.</p>	
11.	<p><b>Safeguarding</b>  Referring to the Safeguarding report which was circulated before the meeting. The following questions were asked and had been answered by email by the Trust’s Safeguarding Lead: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What was the learning from the audits regarding housekeeping and best practice?</i>  A range of quick fixes in the main (details were in each report - not really common themes to pull out). Examples include: ensuring older children were even clearer about British Values, some schools needed to redo the Lockdown procedure, some staff less confident so DoS offered suggestions for raising profiles, housekeeping on websites (DSL photos), Checking AP is on Evolve, how do schools ensure all staff have completed MSF etc.</li> <li>• <i>For the introduction of CPOMS Trust wide, could the current users – DSLs and HTs – be a ‘go to’ trainer and support / coach?</i> The Trust’s Safeguarding Lead (Alex Waterman - AW) reported that she was currently working with 2 Academy Heads (AH) on agreeing categories, useful conversations as these schools were using CPOMS differently now. The 2 AHs agreed that the way both these schools currently used CPOMS could be developed, so though they knew the programme well there was work to be done about how the programme was used. AW added that in her view, the training needed to be in 2 parts, currently called Using CPOMS and Creating High Quality Chronologies. Using CPOMS was an hour online training which is run by the CPOMS team. The second part of this, Creating High Quality Chronologies, was the tricky bit. The Trust would need to ensure that all records were of high quality, clearly and impartially written, <u>court and GDPR</u> ready and correctly categorised. AW reported that she planned to train AHs and DSLs in Summer 1 and for them to roll out to their staff summer 2.</li> <li>• <i>Are we clear to what the definition of niggles.</i> The CEO said that the language was used for low level concerns which go towards to neglect. The new system would pick these up and this phrase would be dropped.</li> </ul>	
12.	<p><b>Trust Risk Register</b> – Trustees to consider report on the following risk categories: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding</li> <li>• Education Standards and Achievement</li> </ul> <p>It was noted that due time constraints that this would be deferred. The GP added that all the categories would be reviewed at the Board of Trustees meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2024.</p>	

13.	<b>Strategic Plan - School Improvement and Safeguarding</b> The review would be done at the end of next term.	
14.	<b>Policies</b> 14.1 Exclusion - the policy was circulated before the meeting. <i>The Trustees asked for clarification as to which behaviour policy was being referred to in the exclusion policy? It was commented that there were several references to pupils of 18+ and asked for these to be taken out. The Trustees asked whether the LA co-ordinated the managed moves. The CEO said that the managed moves were done in collaboration with the LA. Referring to top of page 6 the Trustee asked when the information regarding a suspension or exclusion be sent home with a pupil and asked for that to be clarified in the policy. The Trustees asked what sort of local or national emergency would prevent the EIT and/or Trustees from discharging their duties regarding an exclusion or suspension?</i> Taking the amendments into consideration, the DoE advised that this policy was to be reviewed again in EIT and would be re-presented at the next meeting. 14.2 Curriculum – The DoE said that this was still outstanding as it was waiting for a substantial piece of work to be completed in the first instance. 14.3 Behaviour Policy – <i>The Trustees asked if the version circulated was the final version as it seemed short and was missing some key aspects such as Contents, responsibilities, reference to legislation and statutory responsibilities, rewards and consequences, off site behaviour, physical restraint / positive handling, confiscation, transition, support available etc. The Trustees also commented that the Intent Statement for the Relational Approach was a much stronger document and policy statement and suggested that the Trust does not need both. The Trustees asked whether the Intent Statement could be revised to include all necessary elements of a behaviour policy, and so just have one document?</i> The GP said that the Director of Inclusion had advised that the decision was taken that as the relational approach was not fully embedded in all schools, all in different place on the training journey, that the Trust would keep a behaviour policy but to sit alongside the relational intent. The DoE said that the policy and statement was an interim approach, and it would change in the future. The DoE advised that these documents would be going back to EIT for the amendments and be re-presented. 14.4 Looked after children – the policy was circulated before the meeting. The Trustees asked some questions on this policy. The DoE said that this would also go back to EIT to be reviewed taking the questions raised by the Trustees into consideration.	DoE
15.	<b>Evaluation of governance impact – Principle 3: Integrity</b> <a href="https://www.charitygovernancecode.org/en">https://www.charitygovernancecode.org/en</a> <i>The Board acts with integrity, adopting values and creating a culture which helps achieve the Academy Trust’s charitable Objects. The Board is aware of the importance of public confidence and trust in Academy Trusts and their schools, and the Board undertakes its duties accordingly.</i> The Chair thanked the LAC Chairs for the strong questions from the LACs and asked for them to discuss with their Governors how questions could be kept within the focus of the meeting unless it was urgent.	