

Anglian Learning Trust Board Meeting Minutes



28 September 2021

Trustees Present

Claire Lawton (CL Chair), Jon Culpin (JC CEO), David Lamkin (DL), Richard Cowling (RC), Sue Speller (SS), Ken Murphy (KM) and Helen Abrahams (HA)

Others Present

Prue Rayner (PR Executive Primary HT), Duncan Cooper (DPC DCEO), Charity Main (CM Finance Director), Kerrie Jones (KJ Clerk)

ITEM	ACTION
1. Acceptance of Apologies for Absence Apologies were accepted from John Morgan (JM).	
2. Declarations of Interest with regard to agenda items There were no declarations of interest.	
3 Agree minutes of last meeting and Matters arising not on this agenda The minutes from 14 July 2021 were agreed as a true record and will be signed electronically.	
4. Trust strategic direction 2021-22 (JC) JC shared his presentation 'Transforming Together' which sets out the direction of travel for the Trust. He reminded Trustees of how far we have come as a Trust including rapid growth, improving outcomes, outstanding leadership and governance, healthy finances and a positive reputation. The Trust has responded creatively to the challenges of the pandemic, maintaining high quality education, staff confidence and parental support. Plans for this year include the development of the ICT team and the setting up of Anglian Leisure. There is a bid to the Arts Council to become a regional creativity hub and a rebuilding project at SVC, as well as preparations for the Marleigh Primary School to open in September 2022. There remain pressures and challenges ahead including post-pandemic recovery, a changing educational landscape and a time of disruption. Anglian Learning needs to consider how these challenges can be addressed more effectively by working collaboratively. Growth of the Trust has lead to change but provides an opportunity for greater efficiency. To respond to the pressures and achieve our goal requires us to address the long term challenges faced by our students. JC reminded Trustees of Anglian Learning's vision to be 'dynamic, empower learners who thrive and lead in their communities: locally, nationally and globally'. 'Transforming Together' blueprints have been created which set out how the Trust operates, share best practice and provide innovation.	

Chair's signature.....

Claire LSC

	<p>Trust schools are very much involved with this and are being tasked collectively to bring this about. The blueprints cover the following themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People – developing workforce, attracting quality staff, be employer of choice. • Smarter working – increased capacity, efficiency and equity of provision. • Leadership – QASI, system and executive leadership, staff working together, Governance, strategic groups. <p>It is vital that staff see themselves as part of the Trust, with leaders viewing themselves as Trust Leaders and the focus being on all pupils not just those in a HTs own school. JC stressed that the Trust is not a separate entity and this is a difficult concept for many. Headteachers have received this positively and are working together at conference days.</p> <p>Q <i>It is important that improvements are not just economies of scale but will result in improved quality such as in catering</i></p> <p>A Definitely we want to see improvements in quality. In the catering example we are also considering the impact on the planet and a better experience for pupils. We will be engaging HTs and the wider school community.</p> <p>Q <i>How will this be rolled out to the wider community?</i></p> <p>A We have engaged Athene for the communication strategy. We will have more regular communications and a version of the annual report aimed at all our stakeholders and explaining the value we are adding.</p> <p>Q <i>Finance is a key centralised area, how far away are we from having a collective vision with finance?</i></p> <p>A There is a way to go but the new Finance Controller starting in December will make a key difference. So much more can be achieved with a streamlined system but the right people need to be in place. There is turbulence in some of our teams and recruitment and retention of staff is something to focus on both in finance and across other departments such as ICT.</p> <p>Trustees discussed sustainability, the changed environment and impact on the workforce. They asked about use of the apprenticeship levy and JC confirmed that apprentices are employed with a number recruited to ICT.</p> <p>The Trust Board thanked the CEO for his presentation.</p>	
5.	Trust Growth update	
	This item is recorded as a confidential minute	
6.	CEO monthly update: questions	
	<p>Trustees had received the CEO's monthly update.</p> <p>The outcome of the recent Ofsted monitoring visit at Linton Village College had been received and was shared with Trustees. The report was positive and confirmed that points raised at the original inspection had been addressed. Progress is still being made and LVC is on the way to becoming a school rated 'Good' once again</p> <p>Q <i>What is the timetable for a reinspection?</i></p> <p>A It will be 30 months after the first.</p> <p>CL thanked DC for all the work he has done with LVC.</p>	

7.	Trust board priorities and programme 21-22 (CL)	
	<p>CL highlighted the significant achievement by Anglian Learning who were awarded the NGA Outstanding Governance Award recently. She stressed that our development is an on-going process and raised a number of areas to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one new Trustee is needed, preferably two. There is one candidate with an educational background who is being followed up. CL requested that should any Trustee be considering stepping down, they recommend a potential replacement • Distribution of work across Trustees – in particular SS has many responsibilities • Development of communications with the parent body and community. • Trustees attending LGB meetings – some interested was expressed when LGBs were asked about this in July. KJ will follow up. • Feedback on the Trustee induction process was requested from HA and JM. This should be sent to RC ahead of the R&G committee meeting • Consider where knowledge gaps are and whether to invite external speakers such as Stone King or Eileen Milner and on possible topics such as educational data PR is looking into possible training around opening a new school. <p>Q When might face to face meetings be possible? A We hope that the next meeting may be face to face We will probably organise a separate meeting to invite a speaker and to have more in depth development discussions.</p> <p>Trustees highlighted that the Board has not achieved diversity despite efforts. Discussions continue in this regard.</p>	<p>KJ to follow up and arrange some visits</p> <p>HA/JM to feedback on induction</p>
8.	Academy Trust Handbook update (CM)	
	<p>The new Academy Trust Handbook (formerly Academies Financial Handbook) had been shared with Trustees together with a summary of the changes. CM confirmed that Anglian Learning is compliant in all areas.</p> <p>A letter from Eileen Milner, former ESFA CEO, had also been sent to Trustees. This correspondence to the Accounting Officer highlights the changes to the Academy Trust Handbook, the timetable for financial returns and other financial guidance available. There is revised guidance for risk management which is in accordance with the work we are currently developing.</p> <p>Section 2.51 of the Academy Trust Handbook states that the agenda, minutes and papers of all Trustee and local governor meetings should be available for public inspection. This will be discussed at the next Remuneration and Governance Committee meeting on 15 November.</p> <p>All agreed that in the meantime a holding statement should be added to websites confirming how these papers can be accessed in order to ensure the minimum requirements are met.</p>	<p>Item for R&G committee</p> <p>KJ/CM will confirm that there is a FOI statement on the website</p>

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9.	Start of term update (DC)	
	<p>Leaders have reported a positive start to the year and are focussing on expectations and improvement planning. The majority of pupils are pleased to be back in school, but a small number are finding the return challenging. The central team have finally been able to visit schools in person.</p> <p>There are still some challenges such as rising Covid cases. Attendance has been higher than national average and an outbreak management plan is in place. Lateral flow tests have been conducted in Secondary schools and the vaccination programme is being rolled out. There has been forceful challenge from a few parents and the central team are supporting schools with this.</p> <p>The recent Trust Leadership Group conference was well attended and very positive. Best practice is being shared and over 40 strategic groups are now in place. The Assistant Directors have settled in and are already making a difference.</p> <p>The primary schools are seeing a number of complex SEND cases and the central team are looking at how to support them.</p> <p>Q Is there a policy on dealing with those who oppose vaccinations if the situation escalates?</p> <p>A We have sent guidance and legal advice to our schools and we are liaising with the LAs. Protests are unlikely but any security concerns will be reported to the School Immunisation Service.</p> <p>Teacher assessed grades</p> <p>The have been a large number of assessed grades for Y11s across the Trust. The process was robust and there was no corrective feedback following the quality assurance process. There were on average around 7-8 appeals at each school.</p> <p>The grades were in line with predicted and no over inflation was seen. However, there is no data to compare with. More detail will be shared at the Education committee</p> <p>It is difficult to make predictions and set targets for next year. DC is involved with a ministerial group tasked with looking at this.</p> <p>Q What about Y13 grades?</p> <p>A The grades were in line with national and were as expected. There were fewer appeals. The disadvantaged gap has increased.</p> <p>Q Did pupils progress on to their chosen Post 16 option?</p> <p>A Yes, as there were no grade changes there were no surprises.</p> <p>Q What are student numbers like for next year?</p> <p>A For Y7 some schools have seen growth although LVC has struggled to recruit. All are broadly in line with the financial forecast. In Y12 JFAN has a small group which was anticipated because the Y11 group was small. But Netherhall numbers are down by 27 compared with budgeted. There may be a number of factors including over-subscription by Long Road and the lack of a personalised approach at NHL due to the pandemic.</p> <p>Q Have we had to turn students away due to over subscription?</p> <p>A All catchment pupils have a place, some out of area may have been turned down</p>	

	<p>Q Is the LVC decline in numbers demographic or due to the Ofsted rating?</p> <p>A Probably an element of both. Feeder primary school numbers were down, although usually LVC receives a high number of out of area pupils. These pupils have other options such as Haverhill, Essex schools and private schools. Work is being done to look at LVC pupil numbers in more depth.</p> <p>The Board thanked all staff involved in the assessed grades.</p>	
10.	<p>Ofsted summary evaluation of Trusts (PR)</p> <p>MAT reviews are being introduced in Spring 2022 with 12 evaluation visits up to April at a selection of MATs. There are no fixed views about the arrangements and the visits are part of a process that will assess how these reviews will work best.</p> <p>The aim is to look at the impact of the MAT and the team will use existing evidence in whatever format. There will be a focus on the quality of education and in the initial year a focus on curriculum and covid recovery.</p> <p>The process involves 2 stages where Stage 1 is a routine Ofsted inspection of academies with a Stage 2 MAT visit the following term. The MAT visit will mirror the academy inspection process with a start phone call to JC.</p> <p>They will look at how the MAT supports its academies with school improvement in the following focus areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MAT governance and evaluation • Curriculum and quality of education • Leadership and management • Behaviour and attitudes <p>It is not a statutory requirement for MATs to engage with the process. Any additional follow up visits and phone calls to school leaders are agreed with the MAT.</p> <p>PR shared the types of priority questions that may be asked and went on to suggest some key considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidencing our impact through the pandemic • Does Power Bi show all we wish it to? • Review of meeting minutes – sufficient challenge? • Summary evidence of targeting resources • Responses of leaders to calls • Likely inspections. 	
11.	<p>Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management accounts • Consideration of surplus • FEOC report <p>Trustees had received the period 11 accounts, IMP forecast summary and a paper outlining the proposed approach to the forecast surplus. The surplus at outturn will be greater than anticipated at P11 and is largely attributable to the secondary schools. The forecast reflects the complexities of operating schools during the pandemic. A number of funds have been under-spent including pupil premium, catch up, PE and sports premium. A detailed analysis is to be carried out.</p>	

	<p>There are two outstanding issues. The first is a council tax refund which is due at Howard, the second is the ongoing dispute over an invoice received in relation to the JFAN land sale.</p> <p>The Trust Central Team are working with the academies this year to explore ways to utilise the surplus to benefit pupils and detailed plans will be required. Consideration is being given to a central fund for use for recovery from the pandemic. Trustees stressed the need for everyone across the Trust to understand that the surpluses should be used to benefit all pupils. Where large capital projects are considered it must be clear what impact this will have for pupils. The CEO reported that the Trust Leadership Group were very positive at their recent meeting and will be considering both central and targeted projects. He explained that the central team is considering scaling up the iPad project to include some primary schools.</p> <p>Q Is there potential for surpluses to be clawed back?</p> <p>A There is some claw back provision for example in relation to PE and sports premium where there are strict rules, despite not having been able to use some of the funding during the pandemic. However, the Trust has been allowed to roll the funding forward and it is unlikely repayments will be required.</p>	
12.	Review and confirm committee membership and Chairs	
	<p>Membership of the committee will remain unchanged for now. It was noted that the Education committee would like to increase its membership. This will be reviewed when further Trustees have been recruited.</p> <p>Election of Chairs of committees will take place in line with terms of reference with approval by the Board. Any current Chairs wishing to stand down were asked to let CL know.</p>	
13.	Policy approval	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding and Child Protection This included the template for individual academies and also an Adult Safeguarding policy for those offering adult education. • Complaints There had been some minor amendments. <p>All policies were approved.</p>	
14.	AOB	
	<p>The Chair of Trustees thanked the central team for all their hard work which has prepared Anglian Learning for next year and beyond. She also thanked them for always keeping the Trust Board informed.</p> <p>CL will organise 1:1 meetings with Trustees and will arrange an additional Board meeting to discuss Board development.</p>	
15.	Date time and venue of next meeting	
	<p>The date of the next meeting is 14 December 2021.</p> <p>Meeting ended at 10.20am.</p>	

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Claire LSC

Items for Future Meetings	
Meeting	Item
R&G Committee	Discussion around making all meeting papers available for public inspection in line with the ATH. Review of Trustee induction process
Education Committee	Teacher assessed grades

Action Log			
ITEM	ACTION	DEADLINE	RESPONSIBILITY
5	Send details of proposed Marleigh governors to Trustees for approval	Half term	KJ
7	Follow up on Trustees attending LGBs and arrange some visits	Half term	KJ
7	Feedback on induction	R&G committee 15 Nov	HA/JM
8	KJ/CM will confirm that there is a FOI statement on the website	12 October	KJ/CM

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Claire LSZ