

**Anglian Learning
Trust Board
Meeting Minutes**



12 December 2022

Trustees Present

Claire Lawton (CL Chair), Jon Culpin (JC CEO), David Lamkin (DL), Richard Cowling (RC), Sue O'Farrell (SO), Ken Murphy (KM), Helen Abrahams (HA), Pauline Ball (PB), John Morgan (JM) and Carin Taylor (CT)

Others Present

Prue Rayner (PR Director of Primary Education), Duncan Cooper (DC Director of Secondary Education), Charity Main (CM COO), Camilla Saunders (CS Director of Inclusion) and Kerrie Jones (KJ Head of Governance Support, Compliance and Risk)

	ITEM	ACTION
1.	Acceptance of Apologies for Absence	
	There were no apologies for absence.	
2.	Declarations of Interest with regard to agenda items	
	There were no declarations of interest.	
3	Agree minutes of last meeting and Matters arising	
	The minutes and confidential minutes from 27 Sep 2022 were agreed as a true record and will be signed electronically. All actions had been completed and there were no matters arising.	
4.	Trust growth update: Wimbish	
	This item is recorded as a confidential minute.	
5.	SEND Provision & Safeguarding	
	<p>Associated papers: <i>SEND and safeguarding Landscape Presentation</i></p> <p>SEND CS outlined the national and local landscape with regard to SEND provision and thanked Trustees for their support in this area. Nationally there has been a significant increase in EHCPs over the last 5 years and this has been reflected within the Trust.</p> <p>Many EHCPs now come without funding. There is also an increase in pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs, some with significant behavioural challenges. SEND pupils have high rates of absence and persistent absence. Covid-19 has also had a negative impact and those starting school post pandemic need more support.</p> <p>The overall picture has been highlighted by a number of agencies, describing the lack of specialists and specific training. It is recognised that a more holistic approach is needed.</p> <p>Within the Trust we are experiencing a lack of expertise and LA support for SEND. To try to address some of the issues we have developed the inclusion blueprint, taken on additional specialist staff, offered enhanced training and are taking an increasingly robust stance with the LA.</p> <p>Safeguarding Similar issues are seen with safeguarding, with higher thresholds in place and schools now being safeguarding partners. Consequently</p>	

Chair's signature..

Claire LSC

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Date.....

	<p>schools may be the lead professionals around a child but they don't necessarily have the structures in place to manage this. It was noted that parents are increasing challenging schools on SEND provision.</p> <p>There has been a change in the types of concerns reported, with an increase in what is expected to be picked up under the umbrella of safeguarding. Some safeguarding concerns are taking up a huge amount of leadership capacity. There are also broader categorisations which means more concerns are reported and teams are having to change to reflect this, for example some of our secondary schools have been restructuring their pastoral and safeguarding teams.</p> <p>Anglian Learning has a highly skilled group of Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and has developed the Safeguarding blueprint. Internal and external safeguarding audits are also carried out and there is a safeguarding governor group. Further developments will include a safeguarding handbook and mandatory training.</p> <p>Trustees thanked CS and her teams for all their hard work.</p> <p>Q <i>If there is no funding with EHCPs are we better off not pursuing?</i> A The LA is now looking to issue EHCPs for just high level needs. It is therefore likely that going forward there will be a change to the criteria and consequently in what is included in the ordinarily available provision.</p> <p>Q <i>Do special schools rely on EHCP funding?</i> A An EHCP is required for a special school place. They also get top up funding.</p> <p>Q <i>Should we consider having a special school?</i> A There is a shortage of places in the county so this is something that could be considered but it should be noted that the LA decides when and where to establish a special school.</p> <p>Q <i>Do you have an Enhanced Resource Base (ERB)?</i> A No, the LA has approached us but it does not have an appropriate strategy in place.</p> <p>Q <i>Does the LA meet its legal obligations?</i> A Not always; we have had some good support but there is a lack of capacity. If need is identified there is a legal duty on the LA to meet that need. Special schools sometimes cannot take pupils and those with challenging needs therefore remain in schools to try to meet their needs. Recently we have taken a more robust approach with the LA</p> <p>Trustees expressed their support for taking a strong line with the LA and for making sure staff have appropriate training and are adequately supported.</p>	Update at next Board meeting
6.	Academy Improvement Strategy Update	
	<p>Associated papers: <i>Academy Improvement Strategy</i> <i>AIS High Level overviews Primary</i> <i>AIS High Level overviews Secondary</i></p> <p>Academy Improvement Strategy The Academy Improvement Strategy sets out the core principles of Anglian Learning's approach and details how we improve and develop our academies. It has been developed in recent years, working with our external partners. The level of support that each school will receive or can contribute is set down. The blueprints and associated frameworks support the strategy.</p> <p>Q <i>What are the metrics you will use to understand where schools are and how they move between tiers?</i></p>	

	<p>A There is no defining line. We look at leadership capacity and ensure systems are strong. The Academy improvement team undertake visits to schools tailored around developing areas, and audits such as safeguarding are carried out. As this builds we can gradually withdraw support. The blueprints bring a set of criteria and will help inform the process.</p> <p>AIS High Level overview: Secondary DC explained some of the issues at individual schools. He is supporting with leadership capacity where needed. The Netherhall external safeguarding review reported at Curriculum and Standards is being followed up with a number of actions including fortnightly meetings with leaders and weekly visits by CS. Systemic changes are taking place and CS is confident that these are appropriate.</p> <p>Q <i>Where you have rated schools internally as RI, is this due to compliance or quality?</i> A It is both and reflects greater complexity. As things have changed there has sometimes been a lack of understanding and consequently a lack of compliance; systems are having to change.</p> <p>Q <i>Are you taking rapid actions on gaps in the Single Central Record?</i> A Yes, where an issue is identified we are providing support and guidance to schools.</p> <p>Q <i>Are the complexity of issues seen across all schools – are they driven by factors inside or outside school?</i> A All schools see similar challenges and are impacted by context. Behaviours outside of school are coming into school. All HTs agree the level of challenge is unprecedented.</p> <p>AIS High Level overviews: Primary Significant SEND issues at Fen Ditton Primary are stretching capacity by both the school and LA. Strong leadership at Howard Primary is steering the school on the right track, though there continues to be a large number of challenging pupils. As growth continues at Marleigh Primary there are some concerns with the numbers of pupils with significant needs. Pines Primary have a number of pupils with complex needs but are currently without a SENDCo and there is no specialist provision available.</p>	
7.	Finance Update	
	<p>Associated papers: <i>P2 Management Accounts</i> <i>P2 IMP Forecast</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management Accounts Trustees considered the most recent management accounts. • Funding and budget There is still uncertainty following the Government's Autumn Statement. A deficit of around £1.6m and increasing is anticipated so there is a need to consider a strategy for the budget process. <p>Q <i>What is our legal obligation with respect to the budget?</i> A We must put forward a budget but this does not need to be balanced whilst we can draw on reserves.</p> <p>Q <i>Might there be a future issue with the Trust as 'a going concern'?</i> A The auditors are considering assessment of going concern in the school sector in the context of the current financial situation.</p> <p>Executive leaders recommend a middle ground where investment for the benefit of pupils continues but efficiency savings are also sought. Early stage planning is advisable.</p>	

	<p>Trustees suggested a brainstorming exercise with executives and a small group of Trustees.</p> <p>The report from the recent School Resource Management Adviser visit is due in the New Year but is not expected to provide any real answers to the current issues.</p> <p>Trustees agreed to the proposed approach of identifying possible savings and looking to reduce the deficit.</p>																			
8.	Annual accounts and annual report																			
	<p>Associated papers: <i>Annual accounts and Management letter</i> <i>Annual summary of Internal scrutiny</i> <i>External/internal auditor procurement</i></p> <p>The Annual Accounts and Annual Report had been presented to the Audit and Risk Committee by Price Bailey. The committee agreed to recommend them for approval by the Trust Board. No priority 1 or 2 points had been identified.</p> <p>The Annual Summary of Internal Scrutiny had noted that little progress had been made on many of the audit actions, but this must be understood in the context of Anglian Learning’s approach to internal audit which is risk based and has a deliberate focus on more challenging areas. Trustees were reassured that of the 17 outstanding actions, 10 had been completed since the report was published and 7 are in progress.</p> <p>The Audit and Risk Committee recommend a tender process for procurement of external and internal audit services to achieve best value for money.</p> <p>Trustees resolved to approve the Annual Accounts and Annual Report. The accounts will now be signed by the Chair and Accounting Officer and submitted to the ESFA by 31 December 2022.</p> <p>Trustees also approved the Annual Summary of Internal Scrutiny and the procurement process agreed by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.</p> <p>The Board thanked SC and the finance team for all their hard work.</p>																			
9.	LVC proposal to reduce PAN																			
	<p>Associated papers: LVC consultation proposal</p> <p>The proposal explained the rationale for reducing the PAN to 150.</p> <p>Trustees approved the proposal, which is currently out to consultation.</p>																			
10.	Governance																			
	<p>Associated papers: <i>Scheme of Delegation</i> <i>Terms of Reference</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee Chair & Vice Chair appointments <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Committee</th> <th>FEOC</th> <th>ARA</th> <th>C&S</th> <th>P&C</th> <th>R&G</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Chair</td> <td>KM</td> <td>JM</td> <td>PB</td> <td>SO</td> <td>RC</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Vice Chair</td> <td>DL</td> <td>HA</td> <td>KM</td> <td>RC</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scheme of Delegation Trustees suggested that a central Behaviour Policy might be more appropriate than individual Academy policies. ELT confirmed that this is being considered. 	Committee	FEOC	ARA	C&S	P&C	R&G	Chair	KM	JM	PB	SO	RC	Vice Chair	DL	HA	KM	RC	-	
Committee	FEOC	ARA	C&S	P&C	R&G															
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of Reference The committee ToR had been reviewed by the relevant committee and R&G had reviewed the Board ToR. Changes reflect practice and any change in remit for the 'rebranded' committees. <p>Trustees approved the appointment of Chairs and Vice Chairs, the Scheme of Delegation and the Terms of reference.</p>	
11.	Committee Reports	
	<p>Associated papers: <i>Committee summary reports</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People and Culture • Finance, Estates & Operations • Remuneration and Governance • Curriculum and Standards • Audit and Risk Assurance <p>Trustees had read and noted the summary reports. All Committee minutes are available to all Trustees in the Trust Board Team. CL thanked the Chairs for their work leading the committees.</p> <p>Trustees requested additional training in interrogating the risk register.</p>	CM/KJ to organise training with RSM
12.	Whistleblowing, Complaints and Critical Incidents	
	<p>Associated papers: <i>Whistleblowing and complaints report</i></p> <p>There have been six new Stage 2 complaints this term. Two Stage 2 complaints have been escalated to Stage 3 and are currently being investigated. There were no whistleblowing or critical incidents.</p>	
13.	Risk Register: Strategic risks (STR 4,5,6,8,9)	
	<p>Associated papers: <i>Risk Report</i></p> <p>Strategic risks have been reviewed and those that the Board has responsibility for were included in the report. It was noted there has generally been an increase in inherent risk.</p> <p>Assurance descriptors have been changed to align with the blueprints and assurance owners have been added.</p>	
14.	AOB	
	<p>There was no other business.</p> <p>The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions this year.</p>	
15.	Date time and venue of next meeting	
	<p>Tue 28 Feb 2023 9am at Marleigh Primary</p> <p>Meeting ended at 11:10</p>	

Items for Future Meetings

Meeting	Item
Trust Board	SEND update

Action Log

ITEM	ACTION	DEADLINE	RESPONSIBILITY
11	Organise further Risk training for trustees	Spring term	CM/KJ