

Anglian Learning Trust Board Meeting Minutes



27 September 2022

Trustees Present

Claire Lawton (CL Chair), Jon Culpin (JC CEO), Richard Cowling (RC), Sue O'Farrell (SO), Ken Murphy (KM), Helen Abrahams (HA), Alasdair Pitt (AP) and John Morgan (JM)

Others Present

Prue Rayner (PR Director of Primary Education), Charity Main (CM COO), Kerrie Jones (KJ Head of Governance Support, Compliance and Risk) and Carin Taylor (CT Staploe Trust)

	ITEM	ACTION
1.	Welcome and Acceptance of Apologies for Absence	
	The Chair welcomed new Trustee, Alasdair Pitt, and Carin Taylor who was attending as an observer. Apologies were accepted from David Lamkin (DL) and Pauline Ball (PB).	
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 and confidential minutes from 12 July 2022 were agreed as a true record. Actions had been completed or will be completed this term. JC reported that the Government approach to academisation is still unclear. A meeting will be taking place this week for priority areas.	
4.	Governance Strategy 2022-23	
	The Anglian Learning Strategy 2025 was agreed last term and sets out the Leadership and Governance Strategy (slide 4). Committee work should relate to the strategy. KJ gave an update on governance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board make-up and Succession Planning Self-evaluation has been conducted. Two new Trustees appointed in the last year but a need to recruit a further one or two. • Trustee Recruitment Nurole not as successful as hoped but pleased to have recruited AP. Need to consider further ideas for Trustee recruitment: Governors for Schools offering a new paid service following the closure of Academy Ambassadors • LGB Recruitment Recruitment in some LGBs continues to be challenging. We have recruited a number of governors for Marleigh but Icknield has several vacancies and is currently being chaired by James Woodcock. Howard is still working to replace its IEB with an LGB. Websites such as Inspiring Governance and Governors for Schools are being used together with social media and direct contact. 	

Chair's signature.....

Claire LSC

1

Date.....12 Dec 2022.....

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training Training is available through CST and other providers and a number of Trustees have signed up for sessions. We currently have 2 credits for CST Masterclasses. Those who have previously attended confirmed their value. Newly appointed Trustees will complete the CST Essential Trustee course. All governors and Trustees have access to the NGA Learning Link. Safeguarding is provided for all governors with Mentor or NGA • External Review CST to conduct an external review for us. • LGB Quality assurance KJ is working with the Trust Governance Insight group (TGI) on a set of metrics for local governance to be used for benchmarking and this will also be helpful as part of a quality assurance process. • Clerking Work is being undertaken to centralise clerking services which will streamline processes and provide a central bank of clerks for locum and panel work. <p>We continue to be mindful of diversity on our Board and Local Governing Bodies and there are some useful NGA publications on the subject. However, it is difficult to have an impact on diversity when recruitment is so challenging. We must also consider the geographical areas of our schools and how the LGB will reflect diversity in the local community.</p>	<p>Trustees to confirm any CST Masterclasses they would like to attend</p> <p>KJ to conduct an assessment of diversity</p>
5.	Review and confirm committee membership and FEOC Chair	
	<p>The following changes to committees were confirmed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HA will join R&G • AP will join FEOC <p>Trustees were reminded that they can attend any committee meeting and can request to join a committee.</p> <p>It was agreed that PB will take over from SO as Chair of Curriculum and Standards. Trustees thanked SO for her time as Chair of this committee.</p> <p>KM was approved as chair of FEOC following election by the committee.</p> <p>Audit and Risk Assurance and People and Culture will elect their Chair at upcoming meetings, subject to ratification at the next Board meeting.</p>	
6.	Academy Performance in Public Assessments and Examinations 2022 (JC/PR)	
	<p>Associated papers: <i>GCSE and A Level Outcomes 2022</i> <i>Ofsted Reports for Stapleford and Bottisham Primary</i></p> <p>A high level summary of outcomes was shared. A more in-depth assessment to be carried out by Curriculum & Standards Committee.</p> <p>GCSE and A Level The paper summarised the strengths and weaknesses at our secondary schools. It was noted that comparisons with 2020 and 2021 data sets are not possible. Key highlights:</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements at Bassingbourn VC, particularly in Maths, attributable to Trust intervention and a change in curriculum • Sawston VC continues to be high performing • Netherhall performance was strong • Bottisham VC – the school has grown significantly since 2019. Curriculum and Standards will look at the impact of this. • A level outcomes at The Oakes were excellent. Much work has been put in to develop the sixth form, notably by Chris Tooley and Karim Marsaoui, resulting in an increase in both student numbers and positive outcomes. There is also a more balanced profile of students. <p>Areas for development at Joyce Frankland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has been of some concern that GCSE outcomes were lower than at other AL schools. It was however noted that some staff who were not performing well have now left. Bassingbourn VC and Bottisham VC Heads of Department are providing Maths support which is an area of weakness. Leadership at all levels is being strengthened. • A level results at JFAN are not strong and this year there are very few students in the sixth form (38 pupils). Financial viability and quality of provision are in question and it was acknowledged that this is not an ideal environment for pupils. Whilst the context is different, investment in the Oakes has paid off and there may be lessons to learn. • Discussions are taking place with Essex LA about school rebuilding. <p>It was noted that parents and staff are very positive about the school and have seen the improvement in the last few years.</p> <p>Q <i>Are JFAN A level students making expected progress?</i> A Curriculum and Standards will look at this in detail.</p> <p>Q <i>Is it only a narrow range of subjects that are offered at A level now?</i> A Yes, inevitably it has narrowed.</p> <p>Q <i>Are there opportunities to rebrand the sixth form?</i> A The context is very different to Netherhall as there is not so much competition locally but it was agreed that the sixth form brand is not strong enough. Athene Communications is to work with the school and JFAN will then need to implement any suggestions.</p> <p>Q <i>Is there a timeline for Essex rebuilding?</i> A A recent meeting was positive, but although the Section 106 money is available it remains unclear when a decision might be made.</p> <p>Other areas for concern :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LVC still requires ongoing support • Pupil Premium (PP) outcomes across the Trust still show a significant gap which was exacerbated by covid. • SEND outcomes are lower than Pupil Premium. There are huge pressures related to SEND across the Trust <p>Key Stage 2 Overall data is satisfactory or good, with the exception of Howard. All schools (aside from Howard) were broadly in line with or above national average in reading, writing, mathematics, and the combined category. There is a great deal to celebrate overall.</p> <p>There are some areas for development:</p>	<p>JC to send figures</p> <p>Curriculum & Standards to examine outcomes and areas for development in more detail.</p> <p>SEND to be an agenda item next meeting</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcomes at the Meadow did not reflect teacher assessment. This is being addressed. • Areas of weakness at Icknield, identified when the school joined the Trust, are being addressed • Attainment at Howard is very poor. This mirrors at least 5 years of poor teaching and leadership followed by Covid. Progress data in the last year gives a more positive picture but there is still much work to do. There are many challenges including a high number of SEND pupils, refugees and vulnerable children. <p>CL thanked PR for all her work there and acknowledged the huge challenge.</p> <p>Q <i>Are staff still positive?</i> A Yes, PR met them on their training day and noted morale was high.</p> <p>Q <i>How much support do we receive from the LA?</i> A Despite efforts to try to work with them, support is minimal.</p> <p>Q <i>Is improvement taking place at the speed you hoped?</i> A It has been slower but Covid has had a great impact, also staff recruitment and retention is difficult.</p> <p>Q <i>How do we ensure that staff don't become demoralised?</i> A By continuing with central team support and working as a united team.</p> <p>Covid has had a negative impact on developing cross-school working. In addition a lot of our schools have been in the Ofsted window for inspection. Following 3 successful inspections it is hoped there will be more capacity for working across schools The Board asked PR to pass on thanks to all staff at HPA.</p>	<p>Progress data to be considered in more detail at C&S</p> <p>PR to pass on Board thanks to HPA staff</p>
7.	High Level Overview of Academy Support and Challenge (JC/PR)	
	<p>Associated papers: <i>Academy Improvement Strategy 2022-25</i> <i>AIS High Level Overview</i></p> <p>The overview provides a snapshot for Trustees of the strengths and challenges faced by each school. This will be looked at in more detail by the Curriculum and Standards Committee.</p> <p>Q <i>Should sixth forms be separated?</i> A The issues are common but this can be done if helpful.</p> <p>The remainder of this item is recorded as a confidential minute.</p>	
8.	Growth Update (JC)	
	This item is recorded as a confidential minute.	
9.	Finance (CM)	
	<p>Associated papers: <i>FEOC Summary Report</i> <i>Management Accounts</i> <i>Budgetary Pressures</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of year position A £560k deficit is anticipated at year-end . This is broadly as expected and as reported at FEOC. • Management accounts Trustees considered the most recent management accounts. • FEOC report Trustees received a summary of committee discussion, decisions and areas of concern. The full minutes can be found in the relevant Team. 	

	<p>Updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anglian Learning is not eligible for the cost of energy protection scheme for businesses as our fixed rates are below the cap. This also applies to Marleigh Primary as the contract was signed before the 1 April cut-off. • The reversal of the National Insurance increase will result in a £200k saving this year and £300k for a full year. • The current estimate for increase in energy costs is 4x electricity, 7x gas (existing contract) which is higher than we had predicted resulting in an additional cost of £1.5 million <p>Trustees acknowledged the stress this uncertainty places on the leadership, but highlighted that this is a sector-wide issue.</p> <p>Trustees agreed with the view of FEOC that reserves should be used for the education of pupils, with investment in the net zero energy strategy and SEND being appropriate. Some reserves will be needed to support cashflow.</p> <p>CL thanked the executive team and in particular CM and the finance team, for their commitment and hard work.</p>	
10.	Academy Handbook update (CM)	
	<p>Associated papers: <i>Academy Trust Handbook 2022</i> <i>Summary of ATH Changes</i></p> <p>There were few changes this year. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarifying severance payment guidance • Indemnities can now be entered into but legal advice should be taken on any indemnity. <p>Q <i>Would you seek a Limit of Indemnity?</i> A We will always negotiate where possible.</p>	
11.	Policy Reviews (KJ)	
	<p>Associated papers: <i>Central Safeguarding Policy</i> <i>Academy Safeguarding Policy template</i> <i>Adult Safeguarding Policy</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding Changes reflect updates to ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ guidance (KCSIE). These include a change in terminology from ‘peer on peer’ abuse to ‘child on child’ abuse, and incorporating sexual violence and harassment guidance . There is a central policy and an academy template • Adult Safeguarding This policy is unchanged <p>Trustees approved both policies.</p>	
12.	Strategic and Operational Risk review (CM)	
	<p>Associated papers: <i>Strategic Risk Report</i></p> <p>There are currently no operational (OPR) risks outside risk appetite and just a few with low assurance.</p> <p><u>Strategic (STR) risks</u></p> <p>STR 1 Finance – residual risk increased, but in the context of sector-wide issues.</p> <p>STR 2 – has now been split into Safeguarding and Health & Safety (STR 11)</p> <p>STR 3 People – remains high as although significant progress is being made, a period of embedding is needed. A Director of People has</p>	

	been appointed from Jan 2023. This risk will be examined in more detail at the People and Culture Committee meeting. It was noted that few people are taking up teacher training. STR 7 Capital investment – developing a draft energy strategy as agreed by FEOC but this needs to be developed and there are capacity constraints	
13.	AOB	
	CL informed Trustees that this will be her last year as Chair. She invited Trustees to consider the role from September 2023.	
14.	Date time and venue of next meeting	
	The next meeting is on 12 Dec 2022, 9am at Marleigh Primary. Meeting ended at 11am.	

Items for Future Meetings	
Meeting	Item
Board	SEND provision
Curriculum & Standards	In depth analysis of pupil progress and attainment

Action Log			
ITEM	ACTION	DEADLINE	RESPONSIBILITY
4	Confirm any Masterclasses		all
4	KJ to conduct an assessment of diversity	end of autumn term	KJ
6	Provide figures for JFAN outcomes	half term	JC
6	Pass on Board thanks to HPA staff	half term	PR