

Anglian Learning Trust Board Meeting Minutes



16 December 2024

Trustees Present

Helen Pain (HP Chair), Ken Murphy (KM), Andy Brock (AB), Matthew Blake (MB), Aron Whiles (APW), Andy Robinson (AR) and John Morgan (JM)

Others Present

Rachael Johnston (RJ Director of Primary Education), Duncan Cooper (DC Director of Secondary Education), Charity Main (CM COO), Kerrie Jones (KJ Head of Governance, Compliance and Risk)

	ITEM	ACTION
1.	Acceptance of Apologies for Absence	
	Apologies were accepted from Jon Culpin (JC CEO) and Adeline Winshaw (AW).	
2.	Declarations of Interest with regard to agenda items	
	There were no declarations of interest. Trustees were reminded to complete a new form during the year if there are any updates with regards pecuniary interests. Trustees were reminded to complete annual cyber training.	
3	Agree minutes of last meeting and Matters arising not on this agenda	
	The minutes and confidential minutes from 25 Sep 2024 were agreed as a true record.	
4.	Academy Performance (DC/RJ)	
	Associated papers: Secondary Report for Trust Board - Dec 24 Primary Report for Trust Board - Dec 24 Secondary Q <i>What do you mean by the impact on negative outcomes?</i> A The income from the sixth form and staffing transitions may lead to the likelihood of non-specialist teaching in the interim Q <i>What is happening with the SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) team?</i> A In Cambridgeshire, the team is struggling to meet its duties. The situation is precarious, as the challenges are overwhelming, and there is no strategic plan in place. Q <i>What are the potential impacts for us?</i> A The impacts include statutory processes for EHCPs (Education, Health, and Care Plans), finding placements for specialist settings, and providing advice on working with specific individuals, especially in crisis situations. Additionally, there are financial impacts, as schools are required to implement support without sufficient funding.	

	<p>Q <i>Could BVC's Ofsted report be considered fortuitous?</i></p> <p>A It has helped galvanize the community, providing support and assistance and has also helped the school to focus on the necessary improvements.</p> <p>Q <i>On reflection do you feel raising a complaint following the inspection was justified?</i></p> <p>A We still believe the process was not consistent with other inspections. Relevant criticism could have been provided without the overall judgement which we consider was not justified. It has been important for the school to know the Trust is supporting them.</p> <p>Q <i>Do you consider the lesson structure changes to be the right changes?</i></p> <p>A The lesson changes were still being embedded at inspection. We are now seeing the benefit of the changes and feel the school is working on the right things There has been much work linking with CPD, and the SLT are all on board with the priorities</p> <p>Q <i>With regards taking a pupil off roll, how can we be assured this isn't just off rolling?</i></p> <p>A Our lawyers have advised on the basis of safeguarding. A specialist placement is named but the LA are not meeting their statutory duty. Our priority is what is in the best interests of the pupil.</p> <p>DC confirmed that the form to apply for closure of the JFAN Sixth Form has been submitted to the DfE. We are working with the school to look at the implications for staffing and curriculum. Stakeholders are aware following a consultation evening and information on the school website.</p> <p>Primary</p> <p>Q <i>What progress is being made in KS2 writing?</i></p> <p>A The end of term assessment at the start of the spring term will provide this data. Teaching and Learning reviews have focussed on writing which appears to have had a positive impact where needed. We don't do shared data termly across our academies as schools don't all use the same assessment process.</p> <p>Q <i>How do you satisfy yourself that they are achieving the necessary standard?</i></p> <p>A A moderation process was carried out last year and also writing scrutiny during the term. Central team capacity to monitor is limited but this is the responsibility of HTs</p> <p>Q <i>Is safeguarding effective in all schools?</i></p> <p>A We believe the practice is effective. Two schools picked up specific issues which the Director of Safeguarding was able to address quickly.</p> <p>RJ explained academy overviews are considered by the Curriculum and Standards Committee.</p>	
5.	Trust Safeguarding Report (DC)	
	<p>Associated papers: <u>Safeguarding report 16.12.24</u></p> <p>Camilla Saunders' report had been shared. The majority of safeguarding blueprint enquiries have been carried out and any</p>	

	<p>concerns followed up. Most academies are reporting a similar volume of concerns per pupil and any trends are being considered by Local Governing Bodies. Questions were invited.</p> <p>Q <i>When looking at trends year-on-year do you see a significant increase?</i></p> <p>A This was looked at by the Curriculum and Standards Committee. An increase was seen post-pandemic and whilst that has decreased somewhat, figures remain high, particularly around mental health, anxiety and peer on peer abuse.</p> <p>Q <i>What counts as a concern?</i></p> <p>A Every concern that meets a threshold. Some schools use the system to record behaviour incidents. Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) have guidance and work with each other to moderate</p> <p>Q <i>What is the reason for the sudden spike at Fen Ditton in November?</i></p> <p>A This is attributable to behaviour challenges</p> <p>Trustees asked DC to thank CS for her report.</p>	
6.	Strategy 2030 (DC)	
	<p>Associated papers: <u>Vision 2030 v0.1 for the Board Strategic Risk Report Dec 2024</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recap of Strategy Day DC summarised the key points from the day and thoughts about the vision for Strategy 20230. • Breakout groups to reflect on AL strategy Trustees and Executive leaders discussed the shared statements in small groups. • Planning working groups Trustees are still keen to be involved in this way. They also recognise the need to gain the thoughts and ideas of the leadership team and felt it would helpful to add the 'how' but also keep the message simple. 	JC will follow up separately
7.	Resource allocation (CM)	
	<p>Associated papers: <u>Strictly Confidential Resource Distribution</u></p> <p>Work has taken place with stakeholders to explore models of resource distribution which align with our core principles. The design principles have been developed and a draft policy for a new model of funding central services shared.</p> <p>Affordability is key and it must be noted that central Government has made a real terms reduction in funding. There is pressure from the support staff pay award and the increase of the national minimum wage.</p> <p>We can no longer operate central services at a deficit and a minimal central services increase is proposed. Trust growth is included in the model. Trustees thanked CM and the team for all the work on this. They sought reassurance that any financial challenges of joining organisations would be resolved. CM confirmed that a timeline is in place to address.</p> <p>Trustees also noted that there is insufficient capacity in the Central Team to achieve everything. CM explained that we are looking at</p>	

	<p>where capacity can be released and handing back responsibility to schools where possible.</p> <p>Q <i>Will this put pressure on our reserves?</i> A It is in line with our own reserves policy. Schools will need to set a balanced budget</p> <p>Q <i>Do schools see they are getting value for money?</i> A We have done a lot of work around this with leaders.</p> <p>Q <i>The Kreston report gives an average top slice. Have you looked at similar size MATs, what they provide and how we would compare?</i> A What we are proposing aligns with a number of trusts. It includes Finance, HR and IT which many models don't. We also note there are other efficiencies we could make.</p> <p>Q <i>Is the Integrated Curriculum Financial Planning (ICFP) well embedded?</i> A We have been doing this for many years now, particularly in secondary schools. From January schools will use the IMP module so will be more dynamic. There may be some changes to be made to curriculum models.</p> <p>Q <i>Are you being too pessimistic?</i> A No, we feel this is a realistic approach.</p> <p>The Trust Board approved the principles outlined in the Resource Allocation Policy and to delegate any further decisions on the consistent blocks of the central charge and the level of charges for 2025/26 to Finance, Estates and Operations Committee. The Board also approved the proposed revisions to the Reserves Policy to take effect in spring 2025</p>	
8.	Finance (CM)	
	<p>Associated papers: 2023-24 Annual Report and Accounts P02 October 2024 Management Accounts and 2023-24 carry forward requests P02 Oct 24 School(s) Management Accounts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2023-24 Accounts and annual report The Annual Accounts and Annual Report had been presented to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee by Price Bailey. The committee agreed to recommend them for approval by the Trust Board. There is one additional paragraph around SVET joining. It was noted that the management letter is very positive with few action points, all low priority. Trustees resolved to approve the Annual Accounts and Annual Report. The accounts will be signed by the Chair and Accounting Officer and submitted to the ESFA by 31 December 2024. Trustees thanked everyone for all their hard work and a very pleasing outcome. Period 2 management accounts This is still very early in the accounting cycle, but some pressures are starting to be seen. Trustees noted the accounts and approved the modest carry forward requests. It was agreed that some larger requests be 	

	<p>refused – these may be covered under the School Condition Allocation (SCA) later in the year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SVET budget setting The SVET budgeting process has started. The Trust Board approved the proposal to delegate approval of a revised 2024/25 budget to the Finance, Estates and Operations Committee. 	
9.	Pippins Pre-school expansion of age range (CM)	
	<p>Associated papers: <u>Pippins Pre-School</u></p> <p>Pippins Preschool is an independently run early years provision on the Icknield Primary school site in Sawston. The Management Committee has approached Anglian Learning to take on its running.</p> <p>Due diligence has been completed with the greatest risk identified as high staffing levels. This can be mitigated by deployment elsewhere in the Trust. It is felt that Pippins would be an asset to Anglian Learning.</p> <p>Anticipated capital funding to extend and remodel Icknield Primary, including pre-school provision, will allow us to strengthen provision.</p> <p>Q <i>Is there any data regarding projected pupil numbers?</i> A There is limited early years provision in the village and LA data suggests this provision is needed Q <i>How confident are you that you can make the necessary savings?</i> A We are very confident that the savings can be made</p> <p>The Trust Board approved in principle the transfer of Pippins Preschool into Anglian Learning from 1 September 2025 subject to agreement being reached with Pippins Trustees and Department for Education consent to extend the age range of the Icknield Primary School.</p>	
10.	Committee Reports	
	<p>The following committee summary reports had been shared:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FEOC • ARA • P&C • C&S • R&G <p>Trustees asked for an update on recruitment to the Board. It was confirmed that a promising candidate has withdrawn their application having found a post elsewhere. It was noted that diversity is still a challenge, but the key priority is appointment of suitable candidates.</p>	
11	Governance (KJ)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointments: The appointment of Andy Robinson as Trustee and Chris Flood as independent member of ARA was noted • Committee Terms of Reference had been reviewed by committees and were approved by the Board • Committee Chair & Vice Chair appointments made at committee meetings were approved by the Board 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustee on-boarding: paper shared ahead of the Strategy Day had been reviewed and amended. The suggestions will be incorporated into an induction schedule. • LGBs: The Board approved the formation of shared LGBs at Fen Ditton Primary/Marleigh Primary and Meadow Primary/Wimbish Primary. KJ informed Trustees that the LGBs are becoming established and finding the best way to work as a single committee. Currently new Chairs of Governors need to be appointed but there are internal candidates. 	KJ to draft induction schedule
12.	Whistleblowing, Complaints and Critical Incidents (KJ)	
	Associated papers: <u>AL Whistleblowing & Complaints report</u> KJ shared the report for the autumn term. Trustees noted that benchmarking with previous years would be useful.	
13.	AOB	
	There was no other business. The Chair thanked JC and the whole team for their hard work and dedication and thanked Trustees for their continuing commitment to Anglian Learning.	
14.	Date time and venue of next meeting	
	The next Board meeting is on 10 March 2025. There is an Extraordinary Board meeting on 29 January 2025 12-1pm via Teams. This is to review the due diligence report in respect of Staploe Education Trust joining Anglian Learning. Meeting ended at 11.20am	

Items for Future Meetings	
Meeting	Item
Extraordinary Board	SET due diligence

Action Log			
ITEM	ACTION	DEADLINE	RESPONSIBILITY
6	Strategy working groups	Feb half term	JC
11	Draft induction schedule	Feb half term	KJ