The Link Academy Trust

**Standards and Curriculum Committee**

**Minutes 18 September 2019**

**Present:** Ms Jane Collings

Mrs Fiona Walters

Mr Jason Hayward Jones  - In the Chair

**In attendance:** Mrs Nicky Dunford – Chief Executive Officer

Totnes LB Representative – Absent

Woodleigh LB Representative – Alice Moseley

Newton & Teign LB Representative – Jo Carter/Lynda Cooper

School Improvement Lead - Sarah Clarke

Clerk – Becky Ames

**Welcome:**

Welcome by Nicola Dunford (ND) and a welcome to the new Chair Jane Collings. ND introduced Sarah Clarke as the MAT (Multi Academy Trust) School Improvement Lead and summarised her new role

**Apologies:** Cat Radford representing the Totnes Board.

**Declaration of Business Interests:**

1. **Minutes of the previous meeting**    
    Minutes of 1 May 2019 – for approval, signed by Jason Hayward Jones

1. **Matters Arising**

2.1 Constitution and Terms of Reference

Annual Review – attached.  The Committee is asked to review the Membership and the Terms and agree any amendments for submission to the Board for approval.

ND would like all ‘Director’ wording within the document to change to ‘Trustee.’ ND suggested to the Committee that the School Improvement Lead (Sarah Clarke) should attend each Standards and Curriculum meeting and this should be added to the Terms of Reference. The Board agreed. ND put to the Board that setting out the Curriculum Strategy should to be added as a heading within the Terms

2.2 Jason Hayward Jones (JHJ) challenged ND and asked to follow up on Actions set from the previous Standards and Curriculum meeting. ND provided a verbal update and also supporting documents to show that Actions had been completed.

3. **Effectiveness of Pupil Premium Strategies**

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) ND gave a verbal update to the Board on the current position of Becky Humpheys who has a new role within the Improvement and Inclusion Hub, monitoring Pupil Premium (PP) students’ progress and outcomes. Jo Carter suggested that it would be useful for Becky Humphreys to conduct school visits mid-year to check pupil premium pupils’ progress with Academy Heads and keep the Local Board and Trustees updated with her findings

Fiona Walters (FW) challenged the CEO asking, from an Audit perspective on how the current system used by the MAT identifies vulnerable pupils. ND explained in depth how the system works, starting with Academy Heads identifying PP pupils and reporting to Local Boards. If further reporting is required the system in place allows information to be fed up to School Improvement Lead and the CEO.

JHJ addressed JC and the Board explaining that the MAT are currently adopting a data base to help produce reports that can easily identify trends, but this is currently work in progress with Andy Keay who leads Data and Assessment

Alex Waterman, as the Safeguarding and SEND Lead monitors the system and all results are followed up.School visits are put in place to ensure effective support. ND has suggested that Alex attend a meeting to demonstrate to the Board how she monitors Safeguarding and SEND reporting to give the Board a clearer understanding of what happens.

JC expressed concern, questioning what do the Local Board’s do to monitor this, Jo Carter explained that every meeting conducted has ‘Safeguarding’ as an agenda item offering opportunity to discuss any concern. Governors also partake in ‘Learning Walks’ within schools allowing time for Governors to challenge AH in arising issues. ND reported to the Board that OFSTED gave excellent feedback when looking at the Safeguarding as part of the five Inspections

1. **Data and SATs outcomes for 2018-2019**

ND to lead and update, please refer to the four data sheets attached as supporting documents. ND suggested the Committee are asked to agree a specific area of focus for LBs to investigate and provide feedback. ND noted that all but one school has not achieved an overall KS2 Attainment score higher than last year and they are currently looking into possible reasons for this. ND explained that when the ASIP reports arrive there will provide more data to analyse in particular progress which we expect to be more positive, this will offer further opportunity for challenge and questioning from the Board.

Jo Carter challenged ND asking about the influx of pupils moving between schools in the Woodleigh Hub and addressed her concerns about space within the school. ND reassured the Board explaining that there is a currently a plan in place with the AHs of those schools which will address the issue.

ND provided an Attendance Report and welcomes challenge and questions from the Board. FW asked how our results in attendance compare to the national average (95.9%) and praised ND and the MAT as the attendance scores across the MAT are mainly above the National average and the Devon schools average.

JC suggested the Academy look into creating some Parent Forums which are effective in identifying issues parents may have, often resolving them before they have opportunity to escalate. Jo Carter said they currently have Parent Forum meetings within the Woodleighs school’s and it works well. Jo Carter suggested to the Board that this would be good to have in place for all schools within the MAT. It can give a great insight to Local Governors about any issues arising. JHJ suggested this sort of Monitoring would be useful for the Audit Committee.

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1. **Policies to be Approved**

Policies to be approved by the Trustee’s, the Board approved each policy. They will be presented to the Board of Trustee’s meeting on 07.10.19.

6.1 Lone Working Policy

6.2 Attendance Policy

6.3 Looked after children Policy

1. **Academy School Improvement Plans**

7.1 Trust SI  Structure and roles JHJ asked the CEO for an update on Academy Funding and Income Generation and whether a candidate to manage this had been found. ND has met with the Trust Business Manager and they are currently putting plans in place to source a suitable candidate once the position and Job Description have been finalised. The CEO will keep the Board updated.

7.2 INSET - ND provided an update

ND and Sarah Clarke (SC) conducted a successful INSET meeting on the first Non- pupil Day in September with all staff across the Trust . They received a very positive response. ND said that it is imperative to the Trust that staff are rewarded for going the extra mile. JC mentioned the success of TA (Teaching Assistant) training, SC confirmed that after discussion with AH’s they have provided TA’s with more information about the MAT, how it is run and its policies and procedures All TA’s attended their first training meeting and response was very positive, as TA’s are feeling rewarded, appreciated, also enjoying the opportunity to network with other TA’s. JHJ suggested as a result of this that we have a regular TA programme based on its positive impact on the MAT. SC responded by confirming there is currently a termly plan of Training covering different areas. JHJ challenged SC and ND, questioning how we report this for OFSTED, ND advised that it is currently monitored using feedback responses Traffic Light System which were then analysed and reported on. The Report is available for OFSTED to see.

Lynda Cooper suggested a Governors Day where all LGBs met for a networking opportunity.

7.3 ATSIP & ASIPs – The focus for LBs first half of term

SC provided a verbal update to the Board alongside a supporting document the ATSIP SC noted that after meeting with AHs they were able to identify areas in need of improvement within schools and the curriculum. As a result of this ND informed the Board of a recent improvements in IT facilities within all Trust schools , the IT system in place is significantly improved offering 1 lap top between 4 pupils. The Board commended this.

SC has recognised that Curriculum is a strong focus with OFSTED currently and we need to monitor this. SC is ensuring that the new curriculum is progressive and inventive.

JC challenged the Board asking about its Curriculum Strategy suggesting that it needs to be put into place. The S&C Committee recognises that it has responsibility to ensure the Curriculum is guided by the Academy Visions and Values. The Board recognises that this is something that needs immediate attention.

FW asked for further discussion on whether the Audit Committee also has a responsibility for Curriculum a decision was reached agreeing it does.

SC said that all schools are expected to produce their own ASIP plan which reflects their own needs under the priorities identified in the ATSIP which will be monitored by SC.

SC also has a role to support Local Boards in how they support their schools. LBs have a big challenge when it comes to knowing about the Curriculum within schools. Governors are now expected to challenge AH’s about Curriculum.

JC suggested that a set of standardised questions would be really useful to use when visiting schools. It would also allow results to be processed easily. SC agreed.

This identified a need for further Governor training. ND advised the Governors that the Academy has signed up to Babcock giving Governors access to many different training courses. The Board encouraged Governors to utilise this.

1. **Safeguarding**

CEO provided reports for the Committee and there are no current concerns. ND welcomes any questions from the Board. The Board had nothing further to discuss at this point.

1. **Academies Financial Handbook**

The Trustee’s reviewed the document produced by Isabel Cherrett and discussed the impact on Local Boards. Deferred until the next meeting enabling more time for the Trustee’s to review the document.

JC suggested the Board look into doing an internal MAT Review, something that she has experience in. After further discussion the Board welcomed this.

1. **Local Boards**

Reports to be provided in time for the next S&C 27.11.19 from all Local Boards.

JC expressed concerns with Policies that Governors are responsible and whether they are being updated when needed.

ACTION – Policies Governors are responsible for list.

1. **Trust Risk Register**

The Trust Risk Register was discussed in length amongst all Trustee’s and Governors. Some discussion took place around Curriculum and the Board agreed it needs to be further developed, areas are missing and a more in depth Safeguarding Risk Assessment needs to be considered, including consideration of the new KCSIE (Keeping Children Safe in Education) . The Board also discussed the use of IT programmes that aren’t ‘uniform’ across the Academy suggesting a section needs to be added to the Risk Register to take account of this risk. The Board concluded that the Trust Risk Register needs far more input from the Standards and Curriculum Committee. JC suggested that she meets with the CEO to discuss further with the intention to update the Full Board of Trustee’s at the Board meeting on 07.10.19. This was agreed.

1. **OFSTED feedback for LBs**

This document had been previously presented at the Full Board meeting. ND would email it out to all S&C Committee members and they would challenge and ask question by email.

**Dates of future meeting**

27 November 2019

29 January 2020

29 April 2020

17June 2020