

**Standards and Curriculum Committee
MINUTES**

**Tuesday 14th May 2024
5pm**

This meeting was held via 'Teams'

Present: Kate Evans (Chair)
Nicky Dunford (CEO)
Cheryl Mathieson (CM)
Graeme Scott (GS)
Christine Cottle (CC)

In attendance: Max Thomas (MT) - Woodleigh LB Representative
Ollie Heathman - Moorland Hub LB Representative
Corinna Tigg (CT) - Raleigh Hub LB Representative

Lizzie Lethbridge (DoE) – Director of Education
Fran McLoughlin (DoI) – Director of Inclusion (for Items 6/7/15)

Minutes: Charlotte Roe (GP)

No	Item	ACTION
1.	Welcome and apologies The Chair opened the meeting with a welcome and introductions. There were apologies from Rebecca Sear – these were accepted by the Trustees.	
2.	Declarations of interest The CEO is a trustee of the Bearnas Education Foundation. Graeme Scott is Executive Chairperson of the Mario Framework. Kate Evans is Director for Education of the Good Shepherd Trust, Diocese of Guildford.	
3.	Any other business There was no other business brought forward.	
4.	Approval of last meeting minutes The minutes of the meeting held on 19 th March 2024 were approved as a true record. The Chair signed accordingly.	
5.	Matters arising from minutes of 24th March 2024 (not on the agenda) 5.5.7 Attendance for the PPG and SEN. The GP reported that she had spoken with the Trust's Attendance Officer who had advised that to gather this level of information, it had to be done by each individual school so was a manual exercise. It was hoped that the new system would allow this to be done centrally. EYFS outcomes data comparison with Devon – the DoE said that would be chased up and present at the next meeting. Strategic Plan Monitoring – Success criteria on the quality of provision and impact on pupils – DoE said that could be included on the next ASIP focus in a S&C meeting.	
6.	Focus: Provision and impact for SEND To include:	

- EIT overview of academy SEND information reports, identification of practice to share and support needs
- Trends over time of prime needs, pupils moving on and off SEND registers, meeting progress targets and EHCP objectives
- Pupil and parent voice

The Director of Inclusion (DoI) was invited to address the meeting. Documents had been circulated to the meeting with the agenda. The DoI drew the Trustees' attention to the inability to get the data for the SEND pupils in EYFS and pre-school. Comparative local and national data was also needed. The meeting agreed that this was another demonstration of the urgent need for an efficient and effective Trust wide pupil data system.

The DoI explained that there was an increasing number of pupils of SEND especially with communication and interaction needs. It was felt that this was due to the long-term impact of COVID. There was a lack of support and services outside the Trust. The Trust could consider to employ in-house S&L support as the waiting list was now over an year, rarely offering long term support.

The following questions were asked by the meeting:

What would help the Inclusion hub to achieve understanding of the EYFS needs? DoI said that working closer with the Director of School Improvement and also encouraging the SENCOs to focus on the EYFS data to identify early SEND needs.

The Trustees asked for clarification on the SEND information and whether the pre-school data was included? The DoI said that she did not know and as far as she was aware it did not include pre-school. *The Trustees questioned whether the numbers being reported were accurate.* The CEO said the data came through Power Bi and so confirmed that it would not include pre-school.

How can reviews of ongoing documents such as risk assessments/individualised support plans demonstrate input, progress, the impact of interventions and plans for support following each scheduled review? The DoI said that these structures and systems were improving with a new provision map system being created. There were termly SENCO planning meetings between the Inclusion Hub and the SENCOs to discuss individual SEND children. The difficulty was the pupils make such small steps of progress, so it was difficult to measure this accurately. *The Trustees asked how satisfied was the DoI that the provision was appropriate?* The DoI said that in her monitoring visits she would include sampling provision maps rather than looking at all the individual children. The DoI added that every child with a EHCP would have an implementation plan to make it easier to track their progress and interventions inline with the EHCP. She felt that this was a more cohesive approach across the Trust.

How can we ensure that all pupils have equitable access to the full range of opportunities offered by our schools and are fairly represented in wider school life? The DoI said that this would be part of the inclusion review. The DoI said that she was talking to the Academy Heads to ensure they understood that they were the lead of inclusion in their school and it was their responsibility to oversee it. The DoE said the benefit of having a DoI was to ensure that there was a Trust alignment and cohesive approach, and these were fed into the EIT. A Trustee directed the meeting to read a report on supporting pupils with SEND - <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/the-mat-factor-exploring-how-multi-academy-trusts-are-supporting-pupils-with-send/> *The Trustees asked what evidence does the DoI see to verify about equitable access for all pupils?* The DoI said that she would talk to the pupils and look at club registers to evidence. The Trustees said that another way was to ask how many children with additional needs were being given leadership opportunities such as student council.

	<p><i>The percentage of pupils on SEND register and with EHCPS (+ pending) was higher than national averages: what was the Trust's view of why this was?</i> The DoI said that the Trust data was ahead of the national data which made it harder to compare. The DoI added that she would not be surprised if nationally the figure was higher when next published. Smaller schools and the Trust's ethos to be inclusive and use relational approach attracted families with children with additional needs. The Trustees said the effective inclusion of SEND pupils provided a more comprehensive education for the other children as well.</p> <p>The DoI said that the Inclusion Hub were looking at how the SENCOs identified children with SEND needs to ensure there was a consistent approach. This was done monthly. <i>Following a question from a Chair of a LAC</i>, the DoI said that the support for EAL pupils was still to be looked at.</p> <p><i>The report said monitoring & evaluation visits were due to start: when would this be, and what would the areas of focus be? Would there be an exploration of why our numbers are higher than national?</i> The Trustees said that it was good to hear that there were planned visits.</p> <p><i>What monitoring was carried out for pupils moving off the SEND register, to evaluate longer term impact of support & intervention?</i> The DoI said currently it was not practice to keep official data of the longer term impact for children that had moved off the register. The DoI said that this would be an area of development. There was a current register which highlighted pupils coming on and off the register.</p> <p>The Chairs of LACs were invited to share the questions that had been raised in the LAC meetings by the local Governors: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Clarity around SEND data as high numbers on SEND register was there consistency across the Trust?</i> The DoI said that the new processes being put in place would address this to make it more consistent across the Trust. The DoE said that EIT had identified this issue and agreed that there needed to be a deeper dive into this which the DoI would now take forward. • <i>What was the impact for the Trust's SEN children as the Trust focus was disadvantage pupils?</i> This had been highlighted as an area of development was expected to be addressed with the new data monitoring system. • <i>Percentage level of SEND needs in the smaller schools was challenging for staff and can skew results. Was this recognised at Board level?</i> The Trustees raised concerns that teachers were feeling pressure of 'skewed' results. The Trustees said that progress was just as important. It was noted that there would not be a progress score this year due to no KS1 score for comparison. It was added that this was why it was important that the Trust had a detailed ability to track progress. The DoE recognised that teachers do feel the external pressure and work by the EIT was needed to support them. 	
7.	<p>Focus: Oversight of pupil premium strategies and their impact</p> <p>The Director of Inclusion (DoI) was invited to address the meeting. Documents had been circulated to the meeting with the agenda. The DoI reported that she was new to the post and had only started to be looking at PP since the Spring term.</p> <p>The following questions were asked by the meeting: <i>The strategic priority for the Trust was on the improving outcomes for disadvantage pupils last year; was there more that the Trust could do to support the DoI?</i> The CEO said that currently the DoI was only two days a week in her role and next year the Trust was looking at increasing her capacity. The CEO added that it took at least a year for a new post to understand their working knowledge to then be able to develop the role. <i>The Trustees</i></p>	

	<p><i>asked whether this would be included in the ATSIP and how would impact be monitored?</i> The CEO said that it would be through the EIT monitoring. The DoE said that monitoring the impact for the pupils was an area of development for the EIT. The Trustees said that the Trust urgently needed to address this.</p> <p><i>The urgent need for the new data system was very evident in this report: it would be very interesting to see 'pure PPG' with no SEND data, and vital to see LAC data. While the Trust waited for the new system, could Academy Heads submit this information?</i> There was a discussion and agreement for the DoI to ask the AHs for a manual data drop on the SEND/LAC/PP pupils. <i>The Chair of a LAC asked whether it was possible to have trend data that tracked a group from Yr1 to Y6 in each area (reading etc) to shows changes in that gap?</i></p> <p><i>To date, what had been the impact on pupils of retaining a significant proportion of PPG centrally?</i> The DoI said that good quality teaching was the most important factor for PPG children. The Trust used a significant proportion of the PPG to ensure that there were teachers in place to support the PPG pupils. Anecdotally the DoI felt there was impact but could not give a definitive answer. The CEO explained how PPG was being used across all the schools in the Trust. The CEO assured the Trustees that it reflected the government guidance and the Trust worked closely with the AHs.</p> <p><i>Do LAC pupils receive 'weighted' funding from the central allocation?</i> The CEO said not currently referring to the previous answer.</p> <p><i>How did class teachers build self-efficacy and pivotal moments? Were there any examples and impact?</i> The DoI said that approach was being practised in the schools however embedding was still needed. The DoI said that the staff were encouraged to highlight pivotal moments and gave examples.</p> <p>The Chair of LACs were invited to share the questions that had been raised in the LAC meetings by the local Governors: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Clarification of the development of PP strategy plans - to be put under review and perhaps the financial element to be drafted centrally?</i> The DoI said this could be done centrally rather than individual schools to ensure a consistent Trust approach. The CEO said that it was an area for further discussion and development. The DoE said that as the Trust grew, the systems would need to be reviewed and evolve. The CEO reiterated that the Trust was made up of smaller schools resulting with a high percentage of children needed additional support. 	<p>Dol</p> <p>Dol</p>
8.	<p>Focus: Quality of Teaching</p> <p>To include: EIT overview of the validation of the Quality of Teaching and Learning across academies, including the induction programmes for ECTs Staff feedback on support for workload and wellbeing</p> <p>It was agreed for this focus to be postponed.</p>	
9.	<p>Local Advisory Committees</p> <p>8.1 Committee to note any additional updates from local board Chairs and from LAC minutes and Ethos Minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What would Trustee engagement with the LAC Hub look like?</i> It was noted that 3 out of 4 LACs felt that under the new process there was no need for Trustee involvement at LAC level. In the remaining LAC, it was felt that an occasional 	

	<p>drop-in from the Trustees would be appreciated. The CEO suggested that a Trustee newsletter could be circulated at the beginning of the year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Could there be better communication around AH appointment interviews, what local stakeholder had been around AH recruitment? What were Trustees expectations of Governors?</i> The CEO said that responsibility of recruitment of Academy Heads sat with EIT. The CEO explained during the recent recruitment of AHs decisions had to be made quickly. The CEO said that for teachers and TAs, the AH could ask for governor input. The LAC Chair said that it was more around better communication. The CEO said it was a difficult situation to manage. The DoE added that during the recent Academy Head interviews, the staff and pupils had been involved. • <i>Was there sufficient capacity within the EIT to provide consistent, regular support to all AH's as the Trust grows?</i> The CEO said there was sufficient capacity; the EIT had been extended. The new schools had staff who would also support the growth. The CEO explained the new structure. <i>The Trustees said that big strategic pieces of work had been identified during the meeting – were the Trust confident that these could still be addressed?</i> The CEO said that this had been discussed by SLT and EIT and it was viable. <i>The Trustees asked again whether before the schools come on board, there could be a 'crunch point' between the need to increase central capacity before the funding brought by the new schools is in place, also noting that schools currently awaiting entry to Link are known to require significant support. They asked how they could be assured that the EIT would not be too overstretched?</i> The CEO reiterated that the Trust had integrated new schools throughout this academic year and there had been minimal impact. The CEO said that there was a thorough extensive due diligence process before schools joined the Trust. A LAC Chair added that she lived within the community of one of the new schools, and the feedback from parents was extremely positive and encouraging. • <i>There was an issue with ipads log-in usage and keeping the children safe?</i> It was agreed to highlight this with the DCEO. • <i>How can the Trust protect the staff when social media platforms were being used to verbally abuse them?</i> The CEO reported that there were processes in place to support the staff. The GP said that the DCEO had sent out a reminder to the AHs of the support and process that were in place to guard against this. <p>8.2 Committee to consider the feedback from the Mid-Year LAC Review survey and discuss any possible changes in the LAC procedure for Board of Trustees approval This was postponed and would be added to the Governance Strategy Plan.</p>	GP
10.	<p>Action Plans</p> <p>Action plans from previous terms was circulated to the meeting. The DoE went through the plans giving a more detailed update under PART II. <i>The Trustees asked questions about the focus being more on academic rather than the culture and how this had been managed?</i> The DoE said that through mentoring the AH approach had changed which meant there had been a positive culture shift. The DoE recognised that this had not been reflected in the plan.</p>	
11.	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>10.1 GS said the main areas was filtering and monitoring, with systems in place. The Trust was in a much better position following a significant piece of work. The other area was the implementation of C-Poms across the Trust; this was a big opportunity for consistent reporting. It was noted that when a new system was introduced, reporting increased so appropriately tagging the concerns was vital. There had been safeguarding audits being undertaken also across the Trust. A more comprehensive report would be presented at the Board of Trustees. The CEO added that at all the Ofsted inspections, safeguarding was judged as strong.</p>	
12.	<p>Due Diligence</p>	

	The CEO said there was a strong DD process; areas were led by the directors in EIT according to their area of responsibility and these reports were collated and presented to the Board of Trustees.	
13.	<p>Trust Risk Register - Evaluation of risk related to quality of provision and standards and curriculum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training around the trust risk register • Risks related to S&C committee <p>The CEO said that there were a couple of red RAG ratings however these were not a surprise; the Trustees said that it was useful to see the register to enable the progress to be monitored. The Trustees asked how the rating could be green as progress and attainment could always improve. The CEO said that it was benchmarked against the national results.</p>	
14.	<p>Strategic Plan</p> <p>The strategic plan with the update from the Chair was circulated before the meeting. The Chair said that she would work with the GP to ensure that all the actions had been completed wherever possible.</p>	
15.	<p>Policies</p> <p>14.1 School complaints – Following a recent Complaints process it was agreed that this policy needed to be reviewed again to include learnings.</p> <p>14.2 Children with health needs who cannot attend school. The policy was circulated before the meeting. <i>The meeting asked whether there should be a statement that regardless of periods in alternative provision / hospital provision / absence from school, or on p/t attendance, the academy remained accountable for the attendance and outcomes of the pupils, with a note as to which absence code(s) should be used?</i> The DoI said that she felt this would be a sensible approach and would add this to the policy. <i>The meeting also asked whether academies wrote healthcare plans on their own, or with multi agency input?</i> The DoI said that it was hard to get external professionals involved and so it was left as a school responsibility.</p> <p>With the above additions, the Trustees approved the policy.</p> <p>14.3 Public sector equality statement for publication – The policy was circulated before the meeting. <i>The meeting asked whether the current policy was for staff, pupils and parents & communities, or just pupils? It was felt that the focus was mostly on pupils, however the Trust had a duty to staff and communities too?</i> The GP agreed to raise this with the DCEO.</p> <p><i>Re-presented from previous meeting</i></p> <p>14.4 Exclusion - the policy was circulated before the meeting. The Trustees asked some minor questions of clarification on the wording. The Trustees approved the policy.</p> <p>14.5 Curriculum – The DoE said that there had been a review of the curriculum and so following the outcome the policy now needed to be rewritten. It was agreed for the policy to be postponed until the Autumn term.</p> <p>14.6 Behaviour – the policy was circulated before the meeting. The Trustees made some minor amendments to some of the wording. The DoI said that the Relational Intent policy still needed to be used alongside the behaviour policy. The Trustees approved the policy.</p> <p>14.7 Looked after children – this policy was postponed.</p>	
16.	<p>Evaluation of governance impact – Principle 4: Decision making, risk and control</p> <p>The Board ensures that its decision-making processes are evidence informed, rigorous and timely and that effective delegation, control, risk assessment and management systems are set up and monitored. There is effective reporting at all levels of Academy Trust governance to ensure decisions are taken at the correct level in accordance with the Articles of Association and Scheme of Delegation.</p>	

	The Trustees said that the questions had demonstrated that these criteria had been met. The Chair said that the questions from the Trustees and LACs meant there were lively discussions which were then subsequently informing next steps.	
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The meeting finished at 1921