

# The Active Learning Trust

## MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE ACTIVE LEARNING TRUST HELD ON TUESDAY 14<sup>th</sup> JULY 2015 AT THE LANSDOWNE CLUB, LONDON

DIRECTORS PRESENT:            Ms L. Adams (Chair)                    Mr D. Bateson  
   Mr J. Beswick                            Mr C. Bush  
   Ms J. Cutchey                            Mr M. Kerr  
   Ms M. Lloyd                              Mr G. Peile (CEO)  
   Ms M. Toft

APOLOGIES:                        None

ALSO PRESENT:                    Mr C. Paskell (Director of Finance)  
   Ms J. Steel (Head of HR)  
   Mrs K. Jarvis (Company Secretary & Clerk to the Board)

Present for Item 50:                Ms A. Hall (Head of Grove Primary School)  
   Ms W. James (Head of Sidegate Primary School)

Present for Items 50 & 51:        Mr J. Wing (Principal of Neale-Wade Academy)

## MINUTES

### 49. WELCOME & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Ms Adams opened the meeting by welcoming all present. There were no apologies for absence.

### 50. REPORTS FROM HEADTEACHERS

Mrs Hall and Mrs James had been invited to attend to give members an overview of Grove Primary School and Sidegate Primary School respectively. Each gave an informative presentation to support reports that had been previously circulated. Directors were given the opportunity to ask questions and the following areas were covered:-

#### *(i) Grove Primary School*

- Grove is a one and a half form entry primary with a 52 place nursery in Lowestoft
- Attendance is an issue, but staff have worked hard to reduce persistent absence to 2.7%
- In an area of high mobility, with a high percentage of children joining after the start-age for compulsory education
- KS 1 results have improved

- KS2 results disappointing in Maths (just above floor levels) - Maths will be a major target throughout the school from September
- Grove was externally moderated this year, with a positive response
- Work with middle leaders is showing impact
- EYFS working at 'outstanding' in line with national levels
- Communication with parents a strength
- SMSC folder displayed – with positive feedback from directors
- Gender gap issues being addressed
- More able pupils are improving, but aware that this is increasing the gap from pupil premium pupils
- Retain a legacy from SEN classes – 2 children at 'P' levels in KS2, which affects data

**Questions/Comments from Directors included:-**

- Suggested splitting data for high mobility pupils to show the impact
- How is attendance being addressed? Ms Hall explained that parents are written to regularly and fines are being introduced.
- Ms Hall explained that she is also Head of Reydon Primary School, and Grove have employed a good deputy head. The staffing for September is stable at both schools, although Grove will have four NQTs
- Does the Governing Body challenge? Ms Hall replied that the LGB is small but full, and asks challenging questions, but further training is needed. She feels supported by governors, and they are supportive of ALT

**(ii) Sidegate Primary School**

- Large primary school in Ipswich with an enthusiastic SLT
- Staff recruitment is a challenge
- A change in culture has impacted on teaching and learning – some pupils have had 6 teachers in the last 2 years
- Ms James praised the work of Hub Lead Trevor Folley
- EYFS data has improved – a criteria for assessment has been agreed and implemented
- Disappointed with KS1 phonics data
- Challenging children in Year 2 – progress has been made, but still low
- Very pleasing KS2 data that is above national average
- Grove have not implemented the Mastery curriculum yet as they are taking time to understand requirements. It will be introduced to staff in September and assessed at Christmas against the new criteria
- Ms James stated that she is confident Sidegate would "sell itself as a good school to Ofsted"
- Induction has already taken place with new staff
- Art and Sport a strength at Sidegate

**Questions/Comments from Directors included:-**

- Asked to explain why there are two sets of data. Ms James explained that there is a Special Support Centre (SSC) at Sidegate. The data for pupils in the Centre, with high levels of SEN, is separated
- Why was KS1 data poor? An inexperienced teacher had a class in this year group who should have been supported earlier, plus a teacher has been away long-term
- Why is KS2 Writing data disappointing? Ms James explained that this was moderated honestly internally, but perhaps too harshly. She will be looking at this

for next year. She stated that there is evidence of excellent writing throughout the school that is a huge improvement from last year

- Is the high level of Autism (1/25) representative of the area? Ms James explained that the high level is due to the SSC, which has specialist staff. Sidegate, through the SSC, have a good reputation so parents opt to enrol SEN children. Ms James went on to explain that the SSC is currently under review by the LA
- Why is absence high? Ms James explained that SSC pupils have high levels of needs, including medical, which impact on school data, but also stated that a marked improvement from last year can be shown
- Does the Governing Body challenge? Ms James feels that governors do challenge, but need training on their roles and responsibilities.

Mrs Cutchey asked both headteachers to give a brief summary of the priorities for their schools for the coming year.

Grove: Maths, Writing and reducing the gap for pupil premium students  
Sidegate: Writing, Staff recruitment and Phonics

***Ms Adams thanked both Headteachers for their reports that were useful to give directors an overview of positions at Grove and Sidegate Primary Schools. They left the meeting at this point.***

Despite a report template being distributed to all headteachers, it was noted that school reports differ greatly in their format. Mr Peile will address this at the next Head's meeting.

## 51. **SECONDARY EDUCATION UPDATE**

Mr Peile gave a brief introduction to this item, explaining that the system for grading secondary pupils will be changing. He invited Mr Wing to take directors through the paper that had been previously distributed. Mr Wing explained that secondary assessment will be moved from the current system of 5 A\*-C to Progress 8 and Attainment 8. The current Year 10 data will be reported in this way (ie performance tables published in January 2017, showing 2016 data). Subjects will be divided into groups, or 'baskets', and results weighed according to how much progress is made and on final GCSE results. When asked for his opinion of the new system and issues it may raise, Mr Wing stated that there is need for it to be explained to parents in depth as it may have an effect on which subject options are chosen. Work will start with Year 7 pupils, with a view to this being embedded by GCSE. It was noted that the current Year 9 will be the last year group to have coursework included in their GCSEs.

***Members acknowledged the Report and thanked Mr Wing for his comprehensive explanation of the new measures.***

## 55. **BURROWMOOR PRIMARY SCHOOL – OFSTED INSPECTION**

*It was agreed to take this item out of Agenda order so that Mr Wing could be present in his capacity of Executive Head of Burrowmoor Primary School.*

Mr Peile gave an honest appraisal of the situation at Burrowmoor Primary School, and the situation following the Ofsted Inspection. He informed Directors that things had been

hidden from ALT staff and governors. The headteacher chose to leave, and the Chair of Governors has resigned.

Mr Peile informed members that he had received a letter from Tim Coulson, Regional Schools Commissioner, where he had considered carefully whether to remove Burrowmoor from ALT, but has decided not to as he feels the school can do better, that performance data is good and the Trust was working effectively generally with schools. The board noted that a comprehensive Post-Ofsted Action Plan had been delivered. The Board acknowledged that they had received a copy of the Action Plan.

Mr Peile stated that the Inspection outcome was a blow to the confidence of all concerned. All headteachers have been reminded to share issues so that ALT can help them move forward, and concentrate on the quality of teaching.

Mr Wing stated that a major issue at Burrowmoor is that they haven't moved with the times. Monitoring did not happen or was ineffective, and evaluations were listed as 'good' when they were not. Marking was poor (this has already been improved) and some tough conversations are needed with ineffective staff. Leadership and management were found to be weak. This has been addressed by an improved SLT and a new Chair of governors has been appointed. Behaviour was found to be poor, and changes to the system for dealing with and recording behavioural issues have been implemented. The Inspection identified an issue with the ineffective use of TAs – Ms Toft will be working with TAs to improve their provision. Burrowmoor is fully staffed, with an additional teacher being employed from September in readiness for a maternity leave. He added that he felt Burrowmoor could be turned around. A major problem has been that staff are unaware of what good teaching looks like, and staff were constantly told that they were 'good' teachers, when in fact this was not the case from the evidence provided recently. This is being addressed by a programme of CPD for all staff

Mr Peile informed members that the NGA have completed a review of the governing body - a copy of which had been circulated prior to the meeting. The recommendations will be considered and implemented, with the Governing Body being restructured from September. An independent review of pupil premium funding has also taken place, as the Inspection report criticised that Burrowmoor was not utilising this effectively.

The Board expressed concern that this had occurred. Ms Lloyd suggested that external moderations are needed and moderators asked to be harsh in their assessment so that any potential issues are highlighted. Mr Bush agreed, adding that ALT need to drive the external inspections rather than headteachers. Mr Peile advised that a system of external moderation had already been put in place, with an ex-Ofsted inspector being contracted. He confirmed that Mr Wing will remain as Executive Headteacher for an initial one year.

***The Board noted the Report as given, and acknowledged the work taking place to address issues at Burrowmoor Primary School.***

## 52. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 28<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> April were accepted as a true record, with no technical corrections.

### ***Matters Arising***

**From Item 46:** Gusford Primary School received a monitoring visit on 29<sup>th</sup> June following Inspection. The HMI spoke highly of the school and the Trust, stating “there is no reason this school shouldn’t be outstanding”.

### 53. **MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**

Minutes of the following committee meetings, that had been circulated previously, were duly noted by Directors:-

*(i) Audit Committee (28.04.15)*

*(ii) Finance & General Purposes Committee (28.04.15)*

*Plus*

*(iii) Update on Actions taken by Remuneration & Personnel Committee*

***It was agreed that the Remuneration & Personnel Committee should meet on 6<sup>th</sup> October (in alignment with the next Board meeting), although Ms Steel asked that urgent actions, for example the proposed changes to the Pay Policy, be agreed by email as needed. This was agreed.***

### 54. **CHAIR’S ACTIONS**

Ms Adams reported that she had approved urgent actions in relation to the membership of the Local Governing Body of Burrowmoor Primary School in that Rev. Andrew Smith be appointed Chair and Mr Jason Wing and Mr David Hilton become members with immediate effect.

***The Board noted and voiced support for the urgent actions approved by Ms Adams.***

### 56. **MEASURING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE BOARD**

Mr Peile reminded Directors that he had circulated a paper suggesting ways that the Board could measure its own effectiveness. He thanked those that had replied for their comments. He reported that, although no-one had disagreed with his analysis of the Board’s effectiveness, a couple of directors from non-education backgrounds had expressed concern that their understanding of specific issues may be lacking. Mr Peile has arranged for Mr Hilton to attend the October Board meeting to talk about standards, and explain in detail the Summer 2015 results.

Ms Adams suggested that ALT approach another Trust to establish how other Boards evaluate themselves. Mr Peile agreed to look into finding an organisation (possibly the NGA) to carry out a governance review. Mr Bateson stated that, in his experience, ALT were in line with other Trusts.

It was further agreed that the ALT Skills Audit that school governors are asked to complete should be adapted for Directors to complete.

Mr Peile reported that he and Ms Adams would be meeting three potential new directors on the following day with the aim of recruiting two to join the ALT Board from September.

57. **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

No items of urgent business were raised.

58. **NEXT MEETINGS OF THIS BOARD AND ITS COMMITTEES**

The Board were asked to note the dates of future meetings for the next academic year. Committee meetings would also be held on these dates where possible.

- 6<sup>th</sup> October 2015
- 10<sup>th</sup> December 2015
- 9<sup>th</sup> February 2016
- 19<sup>th</sup> April 2016
- 12<sup>th</sup> July 2016

***The Board agreed the dates as listed above.***