

# The Active Learning Trust

**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
OF THE ACTIVE LEARNING TRUST  
held on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2015  
at The Lansdowne Club, London**

Directors Present: Ms L. Adams (Chair) Mr J. Beswick  
Mr C. Bush Mrs J. Cutchey  
Ms M. Lloyd Mr G. Peile  
Ms M. Toft

Also Present: Mr G. Hely Hutchinson (prospective trustee)  
Mr D. Hilton (Head of Standards)  
Mrs K. Jarvis (Clerk)  
Mr C. Paskell (Director of Finance and Operations)  
Mr S. Staite (prospective trustee)  
Mrs J. Steel (Head of HR)

Headteachers: Mr L. Abbott (Head at Hillside Primary School)  
Mrs J. Tomlins (Head at Kingsfield Primary School)

## MINUTES

### 60. WELCOME & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Ms Adams opened the meeting by welcoming all present. Apologies had been received from Mr Bateson and Mr Kerr. Ms Adams explained that Mr Hely Hutchinson and Mr Staite were attending as guests, with a view to becoming directors.

### 61. REPORTS FROM HEADTEACHERS

Mr Abbott and Mrs Tomlins had been invited to give directors an overview of Hillside Primary School and Kingsfield 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) Hillside Primary School

- Hillside became an ALT academy in September 2014, closing the LA school with an Ofsted grading of RI.
- Following a period of transition, Hillside has a stable SLT structure now. A new SBM has been appointed
- Hillside is situated in a disadvantaged area, being recognised as an area of high deprivation and mobility is an issue.
- Each year numbers on roll have increased – but recruitment of staff is a challenge
- The new build accommodation is not fit for purpose – eg size, and no coat hooks, resulting in additional pressure on the school budget
- Reduced resources in social care have meant Hillside has had to support from school budget

- 39% of school role are Pupil Premium. Funding is used to improve teaching in classrooms (supported by revenue budget). A recent PP review recognised that the number of disadvantage children is higher than the number who generate PP.
- English as an Additional Language is a challenge – Hillside is higher than national average, plus some pupils have no English at all.
- Results for Summer 2015 are showing below floor, but Hillside have requested that these be revised under the rule that children who have been in the country for less than two years are removed. This will results in results rising to above floor level.

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

- Ms Lloyd suggested analysing progress of pupils who have attending since reception against those who have joined since.
- Ms Lloyd asked why mobility is so high. Mr Abbott replied that there is a large number of social housing in the area that is used short-term, and families often move after 6 months. He also stated that 25% of Hillside’s role are children out of catchment.
- When asked why targets were not met, Mr Abbott stated his belief that target setting was too ambitious, but staff are aware of why and were working hard to raise standards
- Ms Adams asked what impact is expected once 30hrs free child care is introduced. Mr Abbott stated that it is likely to expensive, and will need consideration, but he does not think it will impact on numbers.
- Mrs Cutchey asked why the number of nursery places has been reduced to 80. Mr Abbott explained that the original figure of 104 was set in line with LA predictions. This number has not materialised and the feeling was that 80 was more realistic
- Mrs Cutchey asked how Mr Abbott planned to move staff from RI to good. Mr Abbott explained that staff have moved on, and teachers are being held to account. A deputy head has been appointed with a view to improving development of quality of teaching and learning. He also spoke about the new assessment system which will help, and emphasised an improved learning atmosphere that is structured and well taught.

**(ii) Kingsfield Primary School**

- Kingsfield is situated in a deprived area where families require support
- Funding has been allocated to improving accommodation and investment in IT provision
- The use of Pupil Premium funding did not impact sufficiently last year. Lessons have been learnt and Kingsfield are now working on solving root causes to improve teaching and learning.
- A lead practioner has been appointed to work with NQTs and a Family Care Manager is in post to support child protection, family issues, safeguarding and attendance.
- A significant turnover of staff has resulted in five NQTs and two supply teachers being in place.
- Summer 2015 results were poor – under floor. Two classes have been split into three this year
- An external audit is planned in the immediate future, which Mrs Tomlins hopes will give an indication of improvement to date.
- Progress data is a concern, particularly in Year 5, where there are 44 children, including 5 with statements.

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

- Ms Toft asked how Kingsfield are monitoring low attendance for pupil premium children. Mrs Tomlins replied that pupils and parents meet with the Pupil Premium Champion and attendance is monitored, and challenged, by the Family Care Manager.
- Mr Beswick asked why data for persistent absence isn’t included. Mrs Tomlins will follow this up.
- Mr Beswick asked why the number of shortlisted staff is the same as the number of applicants. Mrs Tomlins explained that recruitment is a huge challenge and all that applied were given the opportunity to interview
- Mrs Tomlins acknowledged that the table at the top of Page 5 is incorrect. This data will need to be re-provided.

Ms Adams thanked Mr Abbott and Mrs Tomlins for their reports, and for attending. They left the meeting at this point.

Ms Adams explained that Mr Abbott's report had been late due to unforeseen circumstances. Mr Peile reported that governing bodies at both schools were enthusiastic and keen to work with ALT to secure improvement. Mr Bush informed directors that the data presented by Kingsfield Primary School was seriously inaccurate – this will be followed up by Mr Hilton.

## **62. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 14<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2015**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2015 were accepted as a true record.

### **Matters Arising**

56. Mrs Adams reported that a small group would be meeting with the NGA on 7<sup>th</sup> October as the initial scoping group for a review of the Board.

## **63. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**

The Board accepted the minutes of Finance & General Purpose meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2015, and noted the urgent actions taken by the Remuneration & Personnel and Audit Committees.

## **64. CHAIR'S ACTIONS**

None to report.

## **65. STANDARDS UPDATE**

Mr Hilton gave an informative presentation on KS2 and GCSE examination results from Summer 2015, including comparisons across the Trust, and showing progress levels since schools joined ALT. Highlighted areas were as follows:-

- Kingsfield and Hillside were below expected floor levels
  - Burrowmoor dropped 11% but remains above floor
  - Gusford have a steady year-on-year rise
  - Westwood's improvement is significant
  - Data from Grove shows a poor year but the headteacher was aware of the key issues that caused a dip and the Trust were convinced her actions were making a positive difference
  - Progress at Hillside is rising – mobility continues to be a problem
  - Maths is better across the Trust, but still an area of concern. Pace of improvement isn't good enough and intervention work is not yet showing impact at all schools.
  - Neale-Wade showing progress in English and Science, but Maths results a huge disappointment. Art only at 31% is not acceptable, as is MFL. The Chief Adviser was working on these specific areas with the school
  - Chantry showed an improvement in Maths as well as a significant improvement more generally
  - Ely and Chesterton have no exam data to share but Mr Hilton confirmed early years data was strong
  - Red Oak is a success story with a significant improvement at KS2
  - A brief overview of Progress 8 and Attainment 8 was given.
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- Mrs Cutchey asked if the Executive Principal for NWA and Burrowmoor was being spread too thin. Mr Hilton thinks not – this was concurred by Mr Peile and Mr Bush.
  - Mr Hilton stated that some teachers "just aren't good enough" and there needs to be a change of culture from heads regarding recruitment. This may involve heads leading by example in the classroom.

- Ms Toft will be working with heads on what it means to be a good leader, including ALT expectations.
- Mrs Steel informed directors that a Trust-Wide recruitment pack is being initiated, and it is hoped to be able to include some flexibility around recruitment and retention payments to attract good teachers to schools that struggle to recruit.

Mr Hilton summarised there is evidence of improvement in schools, but this has to be sustainable. The aim for this year is to improve literacy data across all areas. Mr Hilton's presentation slides will be emailed to all directors.

***The Board noted the report on the Summer 2015 results, and thanked Mr Hilton for his presentation.***

## **66. TRUST DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

Mr Peile introduced directors to the Trust Development Plan, which had been circulated prior to the meeting. He explained that this links to school development plans, and heads and governors have been given the opportunity to input. Feedback has been positive: all thought it was necessary and agreed with the priorities listed. The Board were asked to note that feedback from heads was that the Trust had undersold the work it undertakes.

***The Board approved the plan as presented and noted that further reports on the impact of work and feedback from schools will be provided to future meetings. Ms Adams asked that all directors ensure they are aware of the TDP's priorities.***

## **67. SAFEGUARDING**

Ms Toft explained that the Trust has a statutory duty to support schools in meeting their safeguarding responsibilities, and to implement the recent changes of the government's strengthened strategy on Prevent (addressing extreme radicalisation in schools). Ms Toft explained the changes that had been required for the Trust Safeguarding Policy, and stated that each local governing body is required to appoint a lead for safeguarding.

In response to questions, Ms Toft explained that a Child Protection Plan is shared by all agencies involved with children at risk, and is individual to the child it aims to support. Measures put in place differ case-by-case and are completely confidential.

***The Board noted the report presented and approved the updated Trust Policy for Safeguarding.***

## **68. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT**

Mr Peile referred directors to his report, that had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Chesterton have been considered 'good' in an Ofsted inspection last July. Mr Peile asked that congratulations and thanks be noted for the governors and staff at Chesterton. A HMI monitoring visit at Gusford was very encouraging, particularly in relation to the headteacher, the SLT and the support provided by ALT.

Mr Peile reported on the governor sessions held early in September. A session was held in each Hub, with areas covered including roles, responsibilities and expectations of governors, the new Ofsted Framework, a self-evaluation exercise, and the Trust Development Plan. These were well attended and well received and governors have expressed an eagerness for them to become a regular event.

Mr Peile explained ALT's vision regarding developing leadership across Trust. The successful Leading Active Learning programme from last year has been extended to include 35 participants for this academic year, and a programme for developing leadership at senior level (HTs and SLT) has been introduced.

The updated and relaunched Trust website was introduced.

Mr Peile reminded directors that Chantry Academy joined the Trust on 1<sup>st</sup> September, and invited all to the official opening of the new buildings in November. Principal Mr Craig D’Cunha will be invited to the December Board meeting to give a presentation.

He concluded by outlining changes being made nationally to the arrangements for assessment and for inspection in schools. This included explaining how ALT planned to address requirements by putting together tests for all schools to implement. Mr Bush stated that this plan has been received positively by heads. Changes that should be noted for inspection include: New schools will not be inspected until Year 3, and a new strand for behaviour and personal development and welfare is being introduced.

***The Board noted Mr Peile’s report, the activities outlined to support improvement across our schools, and the changes being made nationally to the arrangements for assessment and for inspection of schools.***

#### **69. BOARD MEMBERSHIP**

After confirming that they wished to be considered as directors for the Active Learning Trust, Mr Hely Hutchinson and Mr Staite withdraw from the meeting.

Ms Adams explained the process that had been followed, which was confirmed as meeting the terms of the Articles of Association. A subsequent discussion resulted in directors voting in favour of both candidates. Mr Hely Hutchinson and Mr Staite rejoined the meeting and were welcomed to the Board.

#### **70. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

Directors were asked to complete an updated Declaration of Interest Form and return it to Mrs Jarvis for registration.

#### **71. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 10<sup>th</sup> December 2015.

