

# The Active Learning Trust

## MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE ACTIVE LEARNING TRUST HELD ON TUESDAY 10<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2015 AT THE LANSDOWNE CLUB, LONDON

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Ms L. Adams Mr J. Beswick  
Mr C. Bush Mr M. Kerr  
Ms M .Lloyd Mr G. Peile  
Mrs M. Toft

APOLOGIES: Mr D. Bateson Mrs J. Cutchey

ALSO PRESENT: Mrs A. Goffe (Head of Burrowmoor Primary School)  
Mrs K. Jarvis (Company Secretary & Clerk to the Board)  
Mr C. Tapscott (Head of Gusford Primary School)

## MINUTES

### 25. WELCOME & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Ms Adams opened the meeting by welcoming all present. Apologies had been received from Mrs Cutchey and Mr Bateson.

### 26. REPORTS FORM HEADTEACHERS

Mrs Goffe and Mr Tapscott each gave informative presentations to support the reports circulated on their respective schools. Directors were given the opportunity to ask questions and the following areas were covered:-

#### *(i) Burrowmoor Primary School*

- Mrs Goffe explained the geographical, social and economic background to Burrowmoor and the market town of March, which is an area of deprivation, with limited transport links. It has a history of low educational expectations, although parents have a good work ethic. Jobs are available, which leads to low FSM. The social mix at Burrowmoor is varied.
- The number of EAL children is small (5%) and 2% of these speak English well
- No children meet the 'good level' of attainment at entry, but by the end of Year 2 the majority reach national levels. By Year 6 statistics show pupils are overtaking levels of national average.
- Mrs Goffe explained the positive impact on Burrowmoor pupils of being part of the Active Learning Trust. Links with other Trust schools are beneficial, particularly NWA and Kingsfield

- In-house teacher training and mentoring schemes have been very successful.
- Burrowmoor has a very experienced and knowledgeable governing body. An example of this is the recent Pupil Premium Review governors carried out, that questioned at all levels. Mrs Goffe feels that the 'slimming down' of the governing body has helped them become more effective, and there is a cross-section of skills within.
- Work is being carried out to address low aspirations of parents and improve parental links, and parents are involved in issues such as improving nutritional standards, how to tackle head lice, and voluntary contributions for swimming.
- Number of SEN pupils is higher than average, which puts a strain on the school budget. Ms Adams agreed to write to Cambridgeshire Local Authority and ask that they revisit Burrowmoor's request to host a SEN unit on site. Funding for this would support the disproportionately huge SEN costs. Ms Adams will also request clarification on what the strategic vision of the LA is in this area, so that Burrowmoor can work within it.
- Mrs Goffe and Mrs Toft both stated that they are unclear on the Cambridgeshire's Fair Access Planning – Burrowmoor has received one pupil through this process.

***(ii) Gusford Primary School***

- Gusford is a large three form entry primary school in Ipswich that is in the bottom 40% deprivation band. There is a mixture of families, with the majority of parents showing a "as long as the child is happy....." mind-set.
- Mr Tapscott explained how joining ALT in August 2013 started a positive journey that is beginning to see a turnaround in results. He is confident that Gusford will hit its 70% target this year, and may even exceed it.
- Gusford uses the PiXL recommended structure for tutoring and small group work, which has proven to be successful.
- A new school Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) has been written, supported by Trevor Folley, to reflect the Ofsted Framework. Mr Tapscott feels that governors are monitoring effectively.
- Strategy for poor attendance has seen benefits, although a recent dip in attendance means that work with identified classes/pupils will be reinforced after half-term.
- Issues with staff recruitment have led to Gusford introducing a highly successful programme of CPD and mentoring called 'Grow Your Own' that encourages graduates and interns to become effective educators.
- Gusford is highly successful in local sporting competitions. Low participation levels in girls' sports have been addressed by sport rotation and enthusiastic leaders.
- Mr Tapscott spoke of the benefit of belonging to ALT when experiencing problems with behaviour as issues can be discussed. Individualised programmes are put in place with Gusford's budget being rearranged to allow support for children in need to remain in school.
- Staff at Gusford have embraced the new curriculum, resulting in positive experiences for children.
- Reducing the size of the Governing body has resulted in a committed group, with direct monitoring that is linked to areas. Mr Tapscott stated that governors are supportive, ask relevant questions, and monitor effectively.

Ms Adams thanked both Mrs Goffe and Mr Tapscott for their reports that were useful to give directors an overview of positions at Burrowmoor and Gusford respectively. They left the meeting at this point.

**27. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2014**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2014 were accepted as a true record by those present.

**28. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2014**

17. It was noted that the 2015/16 Outline Budget was presented to the Finance & General Purposes Committee at the meeting held directly prior to this meeting.

16. It was noted that a report from Ms Adams on her visits to schools had been circulated to directors.

**29. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**

- (i) Remuneration & Personnel Committee (09.12.14)
- (ii) Finance & General Purposes Committee (14.10.14)

*The Board accepted minutes for the above meetings.*

**30. POLICIES FOR REVIEW**

***Exclusion Policy***

Mr Peile explained that a Trust Exclusion Policy had been written in response to DfE guidance that was circulated in early January. Since that time the DfE has withdrawn the guidance due to a judicial challenge. ALT are keen to have a central policy that covers all Trust schools, as currently both Cambridgeshire and Suffolk policies are being used. Mr Peile asked that directors agree the policy in principle, pending new guidance from the DfE.

***Board members agreed the introduction of the Trust-wide Exclusion Policy in principle, pending new guidance from the DfE. It was further agreed that when/if new guidance became available the CEO should amend the policy in consultation with the Chair of the Board.***

**34. NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was noted as 28<sup>th</sup> April 2015

Ms Adams asked the Board to recognise that this would be the last meeting the Mr Bush would attend as Chief Executive Officer. Board members joined Ms Adams in thanking him for his dedication thus far – it was acknowledged that The Active Learning Trust could not have reached the respected position it now holds without Mr Bush's key input.