

**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**OF THE ACTIVE LEARNING TRUST**

***held on Thursday 13th December 2018***

***at The Lansdowne Club, London***

**MINUTES**

Directors Present: Ms L. Adams Mr D. Bateson OBE

Mr J. Beswick Mr A. Boddison

Mr C. Bush Mrs J. Cutchey

Mr G. Hely Hutchinson Mr M. Kerr

Ms M. Lloyd

Members Present: Mrs H. Capron Mr R. Dool

Officers Present: Mr D. Hilton Mrs K. Jarvis

Mr C. Paskell Mrs J. Steel

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| Also Present: | Mr L. Abbott | Head of Hillside Primary School |
|  | Mr M. Payne | Head of Pakefield Primary School |
|  | Mr S. MacAlpine | SBM External Auditors |
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**15.** **WELCOME & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Ms Adams welcomed all present.

Apologies for absence had been received prior to the meeting from Mr Peile, Mr Staite & Mrs Steel

No new interests were declared for items on the agenda.

**16. AUDITORS REPORT & ANNUAL ACCOUNTS**

Mr MacAlpine spoke about the work SBM (external Auditors) had undertaken to ensure financial processes are secure within ALT. He explained that he is unable to present final accounts to the meeting due to a delay in production. These will be circulated to trustees as soon as they are available. He outlined the content of his financial statement that will accompany the accounts and briefly explained how he had reached his conclusions:

* The role of auditors is to give a view on whether the accounts are a true and accurate reflection
* Auditors are required to set a level of materiality – due to the size of the Trust, ALT is set at 1.2 million
* £960k is sample checked
* Maximum sample size of 60 items which represents 10%
* 11 of the 22 schools (+ALT central office) were visited
* All new schools were visited, with the remainder being from the North Suffolk Hub
* 45% of fixed assets were verified
* All cash at bank - £8.9million - was tested
* All bank transfers were verified
* 100% of the GAG was verified
* Payroll samples were taken
* Audit findings letter listed 5 items for consideration – all low risk
* Has seen confidence and maturity over the years, with positive outcomes
* Yet to see the impact of the Compliance Officer & Data Manager, but is confident this will be evident in the future
* Dedicated central team of people
* SBM are pleased to be associated with the Trust

Mr Beswick asked about the scope of audit on cash. Mr MacAlpine explained how SBM check this by checking bank transactions and cash in schools. Mr Paskell added that there is an annual report from PSF that is checked internally for staff payments.

Mr Paskell explained that the annual accounts must be submitted by 31st December 2018. Mr MacAlpine has offered to support this process and is confident that the deadline will be met.

Mr MacAlpine was thanked for his support and was assured that trustees will be following up with Caton & Fry over the delay of the production of the accounts. Mr MacAlpine left the meeting at this point.

**17. SCHOOL REPORTS & PRESENTATIONS:**

Trustees confirmed that they had reviewed the report that Mr Abbott had provided prior to the meeting. He was asked to highlight areas of particular note:

**Hillside Primary School (HPS)**

* Budget reductions show a potential challenge in the third year
* Mr Abbott is mindful that budget reductions should not impact teaching & learning
* Mr Abbott stated that he believes the number of staff needs to be protected
* Mr Abbott stated that the barriers for learning are high at HPS
* The increase in pupil numbers is not stable as there is high mobility
* EAL is high at 58% (national average is 20.1%)
* Pupil premium funding is low
* There is an 11% increase on combined scores this year, giving 41% overall. HPS ‘matched’ pupils have combined scores of 51%
* Progress scores significantly impacted by the number of pupils who are not original HPS pupils (ie joined after KS1)
* Progress of EAL pupils is significant – but only those who were at HPS at the end of KS1 effect progress scores
* Stability nationally is 84% - It is 69% at HPS
* Attendance is just below national average – problems with term time holidays being addressed
* Recruitment of personnel is challenging – Mr Abbott stated that teachers are not prepared for the complexity of HPS
* The senior leadership team have the capacity to cover planned maternity leave
* Mr Abbott believes that the school is at a level where Ofsted would grade it ‘good’

Mr Bush asked why mobility is high and how does this effect progress scores. Mr Abbott cited social and economic movement as the main factor. Mr Abbott explained that only pupils who were in HPS in KS1 add to the progress scores. 55% of last year’s Year 6 cohort fall into this category. Pupils that arrive after KS1, but achieve massive progress, are not included. Mr Abbott referred to a paper that trustees had not had sight of – this will be circulated with the minutes for reference.

Mr Kerr asked how HPS engage with the parent body if language is a barrier. Mr Abbott explained that HPS work with parent ambassadors with language skills. They also hold coffee/craft/cookery mornings to encourage parents into school. Staff are regularly in the playground to address issues early. Mr Bateson suggested contacting a local Catholic church for assistance.

Mr Hely Hutchinson asked about the recent SLT restructure. Mr Abbott explained that this was achieved with little disruption due to natural movement and the school took the opportunity to re-evaluate roles, which are now clear and defined.

***Ms Adams thanked Mr Abbott for attending and for his report.***

**Pakefield Primary School (PPS)**

Trustees confirmed that they had reviewed the reports that Mr Payne had provided prior to the meeting. Mr Payne spoke passionately about Pakefield Primary School and listed the following as areas for trustees to note:

* Budget and mobility are an issue. 13 children have left PPS this term.
* Small deficit budget will be addressed when expected SEN funding is confirmed, and through careful management of leavers/recruitment plans
* Funding must be put aside to address ICT issues
* The affordability of non-statutory curriculum offers are being considered
* Progress has improved considerably, particularly for high achievers – which was mentioned in the recent Ofsted inspection
* Teachers are challenged effectively, with bi-weekly book reviews taking place
* Teaching continues to strengthen, through initiatives such as Teachers Self-Assessment which is used to unpick and move practice on, with staff owning the discussions
* Good practice is shared and taken back to classrooms
* Achievement Team meetings are led by teaching staff. These are a professional dialogue that have impact in class
* Senior leaders lead Pupil Progress meetings, which work on areas for development, eg boys writing in Year 5
* All will be taking part in daily 15 mins of reading after Christmas
* Governors are involved in monitoring

Mr Boddison asked about the demographic of the community. Mr Payne explained that only 50% of pupils come from the traditional catchment area. There is a slight problem with parents not registering for pupil premium funding, as this now has to be completed on-line. Staff take IPads into the playground to encourage registration.

Mrs Cutchey noted that progress scores are improved, and asked if Mr Payne could explain how this has been achieved. Mr Payne explained that PixL is used to good effect at PPS and staff unpick the data fed back. Every teacher takes responsibility.

Ms Adams thanked Mr Payne for attending, and for the content of his report. She stated that it was obvious to all how much he enjoyed his role and this no doubt has had a positive impact.

***Mr Abbott & Mr Payne left the meeting at this point.***

**18.** **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 12th JULY 2018**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10th October 2018 were accepted as a true record with no technical corrections.

Mrs Jarvis distributed a summary of exclusions across the Trust in response to a query at the previous meeting.

**19.** **MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**

Trustees were asked to note the minutes from the Finance committee, the Audit committee and the Remuneration & Personnel committee meetings that were held on 10th October 2018.

***Trustees noted the content of the minutes from the committee meetings held on 10th October 2018.***

**20. CHAIR’S ACTIONS**

Ms Adams informed Trustees that she had undertaken two chair’s action since the last meeting.

1. To approve the appointment of Mrs Trudy Stannard to the position of Chair of the Local Governing Body at Gusford Primary School following the resignation of Ms Marilyn Toft from that role.
2. To approve that Mr Paskell move forward with the formation of a separate company to oversee the Linc 19 project at Highfield Ely Academy.

Trustees recognised and approved both of the above.

**21. DATA PROTECTION REPORT**

Mr Paskell referred to the report from the CEO that updated trustees on the work being undertaken by staff throughout the Trust on data protection and GDPR. He reminded trustees that it is a statutory requirement for the Board to receive DP report. He referred to the recent ICO audit, where issues had been raised. The audit report has been challenged and solicitors have been involved in advising Mr Paskell and his team on the best way forward. The final ICO report will be circulated to trustees when available.

Trustees confirmed that they had reviewed the amendments to the Impact Assessment Policy that had been circulated with the report.

***Trustees noted the content of the data report presented by Mr Paskell on behalf of Mr Peile and the work being undertaken across the Trust. Trustees approved updates to the Impact Assessment Policy.***

**22. ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS**

Mrs Jarvis presented two reports on admission arrangements for the Trust.

1. **Admission arrangements for 2020/21.**

It was explained that admission arrangements should be reviewed and approved annually by trustees. There are two changes requested for pupils that would be admitted from September 2020: to update the arrangements for Cromwell Community College to allow for all-through provision and to amend arrangements at Albert Pye Primary School to ensure pupils from Ravensmere Infant School are not disadvantaged when they transfer to Year 3.

1. **Intake at Reception Age**

Following a parental complaint, a review has taken place of arrangements in place for when reception age children start school. Current arrangements vary from school to school, and some schools stagger intake and attendance times. It is essential that schools offer at least the minimum requirement to parents, and the report outlined plans to ensure this is in place.

Trustees thanked Mrs Jarvis for the reports, and they :

1. Approved the admission arrangements for 2020/21 as presented
2. Approved plans for all Trust schools to offer full-time intake to pupils of reception age (taking parental requests into consideration)

**23. MAT MEMBERS**

Trustees confirmed that they had read the report circulated prior to the meeting. Mrs Jarvis explained that there is increasing pressure from the DfE to segregate the role of trustee and member, and the report proposes to align with this view by Ms Lloyd and Ms Adams resigning from their roles as members. New members would need to be appointed.

***Following discussion and reassurance about the value of both roles, trustees agreed to recommend that members approve the move towards a clear segregation of roles and new members be sought so that Ms Adams and Ms Lloyd can resign as members. These actions will be carried out as recommended in 2.6 of the report as follows:***

* ***To work towards a segregation of trustees and members.***
* ***Members to continue to attend board meetings in order to retain their knowledge, and therefore undertake the role as set out in the Articles.***
* ***To appoint additional members as required.***

**24. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER’S REPORT**

Trustees confirmed that they had read the report from the CEO that had been circulated prior to the meeting. In the absence of Mr Peile, Trust officers answered questions as follows:

* The opening of the Ipswich Free School has been delayed until September 2021.
* It is now considered essential that ALT move forward with appointing an IT technician.
* The CPD programme is to be offered to other Trusts/schools.
* Mr Bush will ask Ms Toft to evaluate the success and impact of the CPD within the Trust.
* Mr Bateson suggested that the Board should set aside some time to work on Trust strategy. It was agreed that Mr Bush will initiate this for the Spring term, with a focus on school improvement.

***Trustees noted the content of the report and the activities across the Trust to support staff and pupils.***

***Trustees noted the progress on the new and expanding schools projects, including the Cromwell Community College, Linc 19, and the Ipswich Free School.***

***Trustees recognised the success of the pupil resilience awards in schools and were pleased to note that this will become an annual award.***

**26. SAFEGUARDING**

No issues were raised at this meeting. Mr Hely Hutchinson reported that he is working with Ms Toft with the aim of amalgamating data across the Trust for future reports. Ms Toft and Mr Paskell are due to complete training in this area before the end of term. Mrs Cutchey reported that schools are enthusiastic about the new recording software called My Concern.

**27. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

No urgent business was raised at this time.

**28. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 14th February 2019.

Trustees were reminded that the meeting planned for 16th May 2019 has been moved to 23rd May 2019 to avoid a clash with SATs.