



Standards Committee Meeting
Tuesday 23 January 2024 at 17:00 – 19:00
via MS Teams

Those Present:		
Andrew Child	Member/Chair of Board of Directors	AC
Colin Bradley	Director	CB
Also Present:		
Jacky Tattershall	Assistant CEO – Quality Assurance & Improvement	JT
Richard Webster	Strategic Development Lead	RW
Michelle Smith	HR Manager	MS
Lyndsay Foster	Governance Clerk	LF
Apologies:		
Peter Castleton	Director /Chair	PC
Gillian Askew	Director	GA
Warren Carratt	Chief Executive Officer	CEO
Victoria Morris	Advisor	VM
No Apologies:		
Mark Greenwood	Director	MG

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	Actions
<p>1.1. To receive apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies were received from CEO, PC, GA & VM.</p>	
<p>1.2. To accept apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies were accepted from CEO, PC, GA & VM.</p>	
2. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS	
<p>2.1. Chair to determine any items of urgent business to be considered</p> <p>There were no items of urgent business.</p>	
3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	
<p>3.1. Individual Governors to declare any personal, business or other governance interests on any item on the agenda</p> <p>There were no declarations of personal or business interest received.</p>	
4. APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES	
<p>4.1. To approve the minutes of the following meeting:</p> <p>The minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 17TH July 2023 were agreed.</p>	
<p>4.2. Review of Action Tracker</p> <p>The outstanding actions on the tracker were reviewed and updated.</p>	
<p>4.3. Matters arising from the Minutes</p> <p>None raised.</p>	
5. ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED	
<p>5.1. CSIF Delivery Plan</p> <p>JT reviewed the report, and explained that all actions are being addressed within the timescales. The Central Team has expanded; this has led to greater capacity and delegation of actions. There are no concerns to note regarding progress towards the actions and JT regularly reviews the delivery plan.</p> <p>AC inquired if the heads propose the priority areas, and if the central team concurs?</p> <p>JT explained that the Headteacher Away Day is a catalyst for exploring priorities emerging from National or local policy (DfE / Ofsted etc) as well as research and curriculum priorities. This is shared with Heads and they can contribute by discussing their development needs and adding these to the collective priorities.</p> <p>AC inquired if JT could pinpoint items added by the central team and whether the direction of the central team and heads are aligned?</p> <p>JT mentioned that this is crucial for both the central team and the heads, because the priority area are discussed and agreed collectively, this ensures alignment.</p>	

<p>JT explained that she compiles all the school improvement plans and identifies common themes. This preparation streamlines the meeting process, saving the heads from duplicating that work. There is a clear line of sight from school improvement planning to the CSIF delivery plan.</p> <p>RW discussed meetings with JT and SR, the careers advisor, emphasising the connection between Sarah's work on transitions and careers in the academies and how that information feeds back into the CSIF delivery plan. Other areas include Phonics and Early Reading, Mental Health and Wellbeing, Pupil Voice and Attendance.</p> <p>CB asked for clarification of the term extended schools; are the same as they before and after school clubs?</p> <p>JT confirmed that yes, they are.</p> <p>CB asked about the audit to monitor school opportunities and how it is monitored?</p> <p>JT explained that they are looking at a after school activity from a broader perspective, focusing on how many pupils are accessing opportunities and clubs beyond the Nexus offer. This information will be collected from schools. The Extended School Manager is examining how many children attend the clubs through Nexus and also the types of activities/clubs they participate in beyond that.</p> <p>RW highlighted that personal centred reviews are excellent for understanding the interests and extended activities children access and serve as a valuable source of information.</p> <p>AC asked about KPI's and if they graded?</p> <p>JT informed all KPI's are identified on the Schools Performance Dashboard and these are self-assessed by schools.</p>	
<p>5.2 Standards Committee Report</p> <p>CB expressed that he found the report very informative and useful</p> <p>JT discussed the report, focusing on pages 4 and 5. She highlighted key strengths including the growth of partnerships including collaboration with higher education, involvement in maths hubs, research hubs, and the partnerships with Derby University. JT emphasised the engagement from schools in educational research with DD leading these efforts.</p> <p>CB asked about the 14 network groups / professional learning communities - can schools pick and choose?</p> <p>JT confirmed that the 14 groups are flexible, allowing schools to choose based on their interests and improvement priorities. The only compulsory groups are Staff Parliament and Pupil Parliament, where all schools are expected to participate.</p> <p>AC asked JT if any further PLCs will be developed?</p> <p>JT confirmed that further Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) will be developed based on the requests from schools and future shared priorities. Some subject leaders such as Humanities and Science are already requesting additional groups. The</p>	

development of new groups is influenced by the demand from schools, although considerations about staff release time and ensuring quality remain important factors.

CB asked what level staff usually attend these groups?

JT explained that the level of staff attending the Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) varies. Most attendees are teachers, but for evidence-based practice groups, Senior Leadership Team (SLT) members may also participate. Support staff, extended school's staff, and family support workers also attend, depending on the specific group.

AC asked how do you measure the effectiveness and adding value?

JT explained that all of the Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) now have a clear focus and objective. Progress towards this is quality assured by a member of the central trust. The true measure is that the research and evidence-based practices are shared and implemented in schools to aid improvement. Examples include the development of audits and toolkits and providing guidance on how to incorporate these practices into classrooms.

JT then discussed some of the challenges faced since September, including the onboarding process for the new executive assurance partners and new staff including ensuring a thorough and robust induction. Additionally, a new role of a maths consultant has been introduced, and although beneficial, there is a need to establish a blueprint for this position. The apprenticeships initiated this year has necessitated development of the resources. The increasing number of schools seeking partnership agreements has required clarity about the quality assurance and improvement offer.

AC inquired about changes to the core offer and asked what Nexus doesn't do anymore?

JT explained that Nexus has moved from intervening directly in schools with significant challenges, to providing more tailored support packages focused on quality assurance. The emphasis is on supporting schools to develop their capacity rather than solving issues for them.

JT mentioned that Nexus is working with an Ofsted inspector one day a week, additionally, one of the Executive Assurance Partners (EAPs) is undergoing training to become an Ofsted inspector. All schools within the Ofsted window have received an external school review to aid their Ofsted readiness and preparation.

Discussion around attainment challenges, JT informed this work is slowly moving forward, and a Consultant Headteacher, JC supporting the school. Key activities undertaken by JC include deep dive of the data at individual level, setting aspirational targets, identifying gaps in knowledge and prior learning and supporting intervention groups.

AC asked a question about attendance on the top of page 11 and the PA rate of 36%, inquiring about how it compares to other special schools or national data?

JT stated she would check and provide this information at the next meeting.

<p>ACTION: JT to check national data figures to compare to PA rate in report, page 11.</p> <p>CB asked what Becton school does around attendance? JT informed that they have a pastoral team that works on attendance and collaborates closely with medical professionals. If students have a reduced timetable for medical reasons, it can also impact attendance figures. The school conducts home visits and collaborates closely with families. JC is working with the schools to ensure that all necessary actions are being taken. CB suggested it would be interesting to see a breakdown of which absences at Becton are due to medical reasons and which ones are due to school refusal.</p> <p>ACTIONS: JT will ensure that figures on the breakdown of attendance at Becton (school refusal vs. medical reasons) are available for the next meeting.</p> <p>JT discussed the suspension rates on page 17, noting that they are quite high. A proportion of the figures can be attributed to two schools and both schools are working with the Local Authority (LA) regarding placements and resources for those young people.</p> <p>CB inquired whether the suspension figure is likely to increase by the next meeting? JT responded affirmatively, stating that it is for the Autumn term whereas the previous figures are for the full school year.</p> <p>AC asked for more information about the Craggs EYFS outcomes. JT discussed Craggs strong, above national average outcomes within the 'prime' areas which include the behaviours and lifelong attributes for learning. Outcomes are below national average for the 'specific' areas which is where the foundations for subject specific knowledge and understanding are learnt.</p> <p>AC asked if this is related to memory? JT confirmed that the children require much repetition and overlearning being mindful of cognitive overload, along with encounters at home and what is embedded in the child's experiences.</p> <p>The report for agenda item 5.2a was presented for information and discussed during the meeting.</p>	<p>ACTION: JT 07/05/24</p> <p>ACTION: JT 07/05/24</p>
<p>5.3 Autumn Term Dashboard</p> <p>JT discussed the report, highlighting that schools self-assess against the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), and the report is generated based on these assessments. School performance is thoroughly discussed at the scrutiny board meetings, and actions are created for the central team to follow up with Headteachers. Each school is on its improvement journey, but challenges and changes can affect progress such as a change in leadership or curriculum development.</p>	

<p>JT discussed that one of our schools current Ofsted rating is Outstanding, but there is a risk of it dropping to Good, particularly in the area of the quality of education as they are undertaking a full review of the curriculum.</p> <p>AC asked when is the next Ofsted inspection scheduled for Heatherwood? JT informed that the Ofsted window is currently open, indicating that the inspection could happen at any time.</p> <p>There will be a change to the Headteacher at Heatherwood and also a change in leadership and Head at Pennine View. There is a plan to support these transitions and maintain as much stability as possible.</p> <p>AC challenged the disconnect between the 'experience of subject leaders' and the Professional Learning Communities. JT informed of the plan to gradually increase the number of subject networks, focusing not only on the knowledge of the subject leaders but also their experience and opportunities to network. The trust is actively engaged in national professional qualifications (NPQs), with staff encouraged to participate in the relevant courses.</p> <p>ACTION: JT line of enquiry how is 1.4.2 going to be addressed, more information is required.</p> <p>MS discussed the importance of collaborating, sharing experiences, and developing networks outside the trust.</p> <p>JT provided an update on the intervention report, we are offering enhanced support to West Riding and Craggs, particularly focusing on curriculum and attainment.</p> <p>AC inquired about when Fountainsdale will come out of intervention (2.4)? JT mentioned that as LW has left the school, it is now important to observe progress for a period of time and ensure rigor, consistency and sustainability before considering moving out of intervention.</p>	<p>ACTION: JT 07/05/24</p>
<p>5.4 Safeguarding & LAC Report</p> <p>Report for information.</p>	
<p>5.5 Contingent Labour Arrangements Report</p> <p>MS informed the meeting that the report focuses on working with agencies to ensure quality of employment meets legislation and best practice, in line with Nexus visions and values.</p> <p>The HR team is working with schools to reduce supply costs, whilst also actively supporting the creation of a reliable bank of supply staff within the trust to help manage costs effectively.</p> <p>AC asked what does the stop gap style partnership agreement mean? MS to check with LS and clarify.</p>	

<p>ACTION: MS to check with LS what the stop gap entails.</p>	<p>ACTION: MS 07/05/24</p>
<p>5.6 HR Scorecard</p> <p>MS discussed the report and stated that most areas seem stable at the moment with a fairly small turnover of staff. There are some vacancies that are challenging to fill, but they are using a "try before you buy" approach with agencies, which appears to be effective in some schools. Doncaster schools remain a challenge. The profile of staff is predominantly female with an 80/20 split, but there is still a diverse age range across the trust.</p> <p>The sickness absence has decreased by approximately 8%, indicating some stability in this area. CB inquired about obtaining percentage data for the days lost due to absence as it's difficult to determine whether absence is a problem in each school.</p> <p>ACTION: MS to present absence data as a percentage of days lost.</p> <p>CB asked about the agency spend and that apprenticeship numbers appear low, is there way to grow the apprentices?</p> <p>MS stated that agency spend is high in some schools. Efforts are being made to explore opportunities for growth across all areas of the workforce. LS and JH are working on this and collaborating with Kim Abbott, the project support officer for apprentices. MS mentioned some success stories, and that 2 apprentices from the trust have been nominated for awards.</p> <p>RW inquired about the progress of the partnership with Sheffield Hallam regarding Health and Social students.</p> <p>MS unsure of the detail so will need to check with JH for more details.</p> <p>ACTION: MS to check with JH for an update on Sheffield Hallam.</p> <p>Discussion about staff grading and ensuring accurate levels and grades for staff.</p> <p>AC asked how schools determine which level Teaching Assistant is required.</p> <p>MS indicated that each school will require different numbers of Level 2 and Level 3 TAs. The roles required depend on the needs of the children and should be factored into budgets. Heads work with finance and HR to ensure vacant roles are not filled just for the sake of it but that needs of the school are adequately met. Personal care is also considered when determining which level of role is required.</p>	<p>ACTION: MS 07/05/24</p> <p>ACTION: MS 07/05/24</p>
<p>5.7 Apprenticeship Levy Usage Report</p> <p>Report briefly discussed. Levy is overspent but opportunities are still available to schools at a small cost of 5% (avg £350) per placement.</p>	
<p>5.8 Risk Register</p> <p>JT informed no changes from last meeting.</p>	

5.9 Minutes of the Schools Performance Scrutiny Board meetings Discussed via the dashboard and intervention report, document discussed.	
6. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS	
6.1. To consider any other urgent business agreed by the Chair There were no urgent business items to discuss.	
7. CONFIDENTIALITY	
7.1. To consider the confidentiality of any items discussed during the meeting None raised.	
7.2. To consider any areas of risk discussed in the meeting None.	
8. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS	

Tuesday 7 May 2024	5 – 7pm	MS Teams
Tuesday 16 July 2024	5 – 7pm	MS Teams

Minutes approved by Trust Board of Directors

CHAIR	SIGNATURE	DATE