



Standards Committee Meeting
Monday 5th December 2022 at 17:00 – 19:00
via MS Teams

Those Present:		
Peter Castleton	Director /Chair	PC
Gillian Askew	Director	GA
Rachael Booth	Advisor - Headteacher – The Willows School	RB
Andrew Child	Member/Chair of Board of Directors	AC
Michelle Smith	HR Manager	MS
Also Present:		
Warren Carratt	Chief Executive Officer	CEO
Vicky Hawksley	Nexus MAT Clerk	Clerk
Jacky Tattershall	Assistant CEO – Quality Assurance &Improvement – until 5.45 pm	JT
Apologies:		
Richard Webster	Strategic Development Lead	RW
No Apologies:		
Mark Greenwood	Director	MG

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	Actions
<p>1.1. To receive, but not accept, apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies were received from RW, but not from MG.</p>	
<p>1.2. To accept apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies were accepted for RW.</p>	
2. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS	
<p>2.1. Chair to determine any items of urgent business to be considered</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academy Trust Handbook and links to CIPS PEP (raised by GA). 	
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 12th September 2022 were agreed and signed.</p> <p>The Clerk will finalise these minutes and send them to the Chair for signing.</p>	<p>Clerk By 5/12/22</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>There were no matters arising.</p>	
5. ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED	
<p>5.1. CSIF Delivery Plan – Update Report (attached)</p> <p>JT explained that there has been significant change in the Central Team at the Trust from September, with new staff starting in post. There is now much more capacity within the quality assurance (QA) and improvement resource of the central trust as we have appointed Executive Regional Directors and Primary Executive Leads to the team. The Primary leads have picked up support and challenge roles, which has been a key development area for this year and lots of deep dives are taking place within these schools.</p>	

JT summarised the key points from the report:

- Collaboration groups have continued and have grown due to requests from schools for groups to be set up. We are now considering how we report the impact of these groups, who will report back to Standards Committee in due course.
- The Trust Induction is now on the portal and this is being used by the schools and tracks whether new staff have completed the central induction for the Trust.
- The Trust Conference will be taking place in February 2023 with the theme of: thinking, feeling, doing. We have secured 30 speakers at workshops and a keynote speech from Dr Andrew Curran. The morning session will be held at Magna and the afternoon will be at Winterhill School where staff will access two workshops of their choice.
- Pupil Cabinet meetings from the MPs at our schools have taken place and they are now planning a Trust-wide Olympics and a Prom. Our first Staff Parliament meeting will be held in mid-December.
- Task and Finish Groups are operating and growing in number.
- The Assessment Group met last week and is working on an engagement model for children working at the lowest levels. This will include looking at the data that we collect as a Trust and whether this is fit for purpose.
- The Nexus Aligned Grid has been renamed as NeXt Steps. This was completed last week for Reading and aligned to a Nexus model. We are working on writing this year and hope to complete Maths as well.
- Attendance report – 5.2 – this has been produced by P Williams (PW) and contains data on attendance and SEMH.
- Assessment Outturn data – JT explained that it is difficult to make sense of this data at Trust level because there are no national benchmarks for children working at below age-related. JT explained that Craggs, as a mainstream primary school, does have a national benchmark and it was noted that the school is some way below the national average on their outcomes. However, the data also shows how much progress these children have made during their time at Craggs.
- Processes are in place and are now embedded for data and reporting, audit etc. The Training Directory is almost complete and ready for launching electronically. We have our HR documentation available for all staff to access on the portal along with a Family Support Competency Framework (in point 5.5 of the report) and a Nexus induction which all staff are using.
- Michelle Hill (MH) is continuing to work with the English Hub who are producing a toolkit for pre-phonics for learners with very complex needs.
- The Breakout club continues to grow and after school and holiday clubs have been successful.
- QA – new processes are in place to support schools with this work.
- We are working with Bader to embed their curriculum implementation and the External Reviewer feels that the school could move to Good very soon.
- Beech – JT is working closely with this school and a review of the full curriculum has taken place since it joined Nexus. The new plans and processes will need time to embed.
- Coppice – JT explained that there are areas of concern at this school at the moment and we are visiting the school every 3 weeks. The main area of concern is around a lack of evidence as reports have not been submitted to the schools performance

scrutiny board, which hasn't enabled us to make informed judgements around self-evaluation.

- Fountaindale – JT is working with this school as they are in the very early stages of developing their curriculum and we are providing support with this.
- Hilltop – JT has established that leaders at the school do not have a strong narrative so we are working with them to ensure they are confident in what they are saying.
- Kelford – this school is in the very early stage of its curriculum and it is evident that the taught curriculum differs from their planned curriculum. Lots of support is being given to Kelford to address these issues.
- Pennine View – work with this school has revealed a risk around humanities teaching and this was an area for development at their last Ofsted inspection. Our most recent deep dive shows this area is not as strong as it should be.

PC thanked JT for this detailed report which he found very helpful. AC stated that this is a very thorough overview of what is happening in our schools.

AC asked what gives JT the most challenge at the moment in this area of work? JT explains that the process is very new this year. The challenge for this year will be about aligning the systems and processes that allow us to conduct ourselves in the same way; an equity of approach for all schools and an ability to carry out deep dives and gain quality information from these.

AC asked what is causing JT the most angst at the moment? JT explained that this relates to the schools which are in the Ofsted window; certainly Coppice and Kelford.

PC asked if there have been any surprises this year? JT explained that Pennine View were a surprise as their systems were not as robust as we expected. Also Coppice and the lack of a paper trail and evidence to support what they are self-assessing has also been a surprise. It has also revealed a number of cases where some of our senior leaders need to practice their narrative.

AC asked how this will happen and what is being done to support these leaders? JT explained that this takes the form of intervention from the CEO – supporting them with expertise around the areas for development.

JT explained that for Kelford and Coppice a support plan has been put in place and they will have to engage with this. We expect to be able to effect rapid changes in these areas and these schools will be expected to respond swiftly. We will look in detail at evidence of progress being made.

PC asked if there has been any resistance from the Heads of these schools to the kind of intervention that is deemed necessary? The CEO explained that this has not been the case thus far and that meetings with both schools are scheduled to take place shortly. The Trust is trying to manage this situation in a thoughtful and reasonable way but ultimately both headteachers will be expected to adopt the measures put in place. Should this not be the case then the Trust will need to take further action.

PC asked about the significant expansion in extended schools and whether there is anything that could be problematic about this? How encouraged are

you that we can expand that provision into other areas? JT explained that this generally comes down to funding. We have the knowledge and expertise to offer the extended services for children and families which is why the tenders are so important.

PC wished to record that he has been struck by how potentially significant this contribution could be to the lives of Nexus MAT children and their families and is very impressed by the amount of activity that is taking place.

Amanda Hobson (AH) is the lead on this area and it was agreed she would be invited to attend a future meeting of this Committee to talk more about this area and to receive recognition for the excellent work she has done. **Agreed that AH will be invited to the meeting on 27th March 2023 to do a 10-minute presentation to this Committee.** The brief will be for her to present a clear overview of the last 12 months. The presentation should include plans for the future and challenges in driving this initiative forward.

ACTION:
JT
27/03/23

PC acknowledged that support and challenge is a very important part of the process and is beginning to reveal a clear sense of what is happening in schools. PC would like to attend one of these initiatives to gain a clear understanding of how this is being undertaken. Agreed that JT would provide PC with suitable dates.

ACTION:
JT
27/03/23

Delivery Plan – AC referred to point 3 on this plan which refers to gaps in learning and catch-up measures. How successful are these plans for catch-up and what is the impact and effectiveness of these? Are they achieving what they set out to do and how can we capture this? The CEO explained that we have to account for the funding so we measure against targets which we align with Pupil Premium plans. We are able to extend this offer and sustain the interventions that we had in place before Covid.

The CEO explained that in special schools we set our own targets so this is about the robustness of these processes. Special school funding can be gained for bespoke pupil needs but there are no national measures that we can use to evidence impact.

What is a biophilic school (point 2.6)? This is a school that is environmentally friendly and has indoor greenery etc.

Staff CPD (point 3.2) relating to sourcing high quality training in the Trust. What is the take-up on this and is the quality of the training driving the number of staff taking part. Is this the right CPD for staff? The CEO is mindful that in schools cover needs to be put in place to release Teachers and TAs to take part in training at a time when schools are struggling financially and with sickness absence. We have a training directory which will allow us to see what training is being done. The CEO is reasonably confident that the Trust provides meaningful CPD for staff where it is needed.

Do you expect that our new Data Manager will be able to help us to identify where staff are coming from for this training? Do some schools engage more than others and is it value for money? The CEO explained some of this will come through our employee opinion survey but feels that we need to allow a 12-18 month

<p>period for staff to properly engage with this and by the time we reach the next biennial employee opinion survey we should have data to scrutinise. The next biennial employee opinion survey will take place in Spring 2024. However, we will provide feedback from the Trust conference to the Standards Committee meeting on 17th July 2023.</p> <p>What does the Amber category mean in Safeguarding point 1.5)? The CEO explained that the delivery plan is about the actions the Trust will take to make us effective in safeguarding. Because of the absence of complete reports from Coppice the CEO cannot be confident that this area should be green. We would expect all our schools to be Green but there is specific context with Coppice which categorises this as Amber.</p> <p>PC noted that item 1.5 refers to termly meetings between PC and the Director of Safeguarding and DSLs – these meetings have not taken place this year for a variety of reasons. PC asked if it would be appropriate for another member of the Board to join PC at these meetings in future to ensure continuity. The CEO felt it would be worthwhile looking at progressing this proposal further in the summer term when we have Directors present in full complement and hopefully have the Advisors we are seeking in place as well.</p> <p>Item 1.6 – Monitoring update – PC asked if the dates in this section are correct – should they read November 22 and June 23? Yes, CEO confirmed that this is an error and will JT will update for the next meeting.</p> <p>GA asked if a glossary of terms/acronyms could be provided to Directors? The CEO suggested that the acronyms would be spelled out in full initially with acronyms being used thereafter. JT to follow this up. This should also apply when staff initials are used.</p>	<p>ACTION: CEO 27/03/23</p> <p>ACTION: JT 27/03/23</p> <p>ACTION: JT 27/03/23</p>
<p>5.2 Standards Committee Report (attached)</p> <p>5.2a Appendix – Behaviour Report</p> <p>CEO explained that this report is intended as more of a narrative of headline behaviour data and invited questions from Directors.</p> <p>GA asked what constitutes an unauthorised absence? This is where the Headteacher deems that the absence is not appropriate, such as a holiday taken in term-time. There is clear guidance for this but Headteachers do have developed powers to make judgements on this. The CEO is following up the issue of children who move out of the area but remain on the school’s roll with the Children’s Commissioner as this affects the school attendance figures significantly.</p> <p>It was noted that attendance at Fountaindale is very low. The CEO reported that Fountaindale is making good progress. A number of pupils were delayed in having operations because of Covid but this situation has now improved. We expect attendance to improve as the year progresses.</p>	
<p>5.3 Dashboard Report</p>	

<p>CEO explained that the vast majority of schools are at least securely Good or better.</p> <p>Pennine View has been downgraded to Insecure Good under quality of education. A deep dive of Geography and History was carried out at this school and this highlighted areas of insecurity. We are now putting interventions in place which the CEO is hopeful will lead to a Good judgement.</p> <p>Coppice is expected to move to secure Good by the next report in the Spring.</p> <p>Kelford – a new Headteacher was appointed during the pandemic. We are now working with this Headteacher to support her in filling gaps in SLT. We are confident that school leaders will respond to support from the Trust in a positive way.</p> <p>PC requested clarification on the report referring to schools being judged as RI. Is it correct that this is not a formal judgement which is made public?</p> <p>Yes, that is correct. The intention of this dashboard is to give us an honest assessment of all our schools. The self-evaluation judgements at the start of the report reflect the public facing grades.</p>	
<p>5.4 Safeguarding and LAC Report</p> <p>This report was produced by Sacha Schofield (SS). CEO explained that he has today issued guidance to schools on how to put Risk Assessments in place where there are instances of peer-on-peer abuse.</p> <p>There have been fewer children designated as CIN than a year ago and the same number of children are on CP as at this time last year. This could be due to increased intervention by LAs.</p> <p>Early Help cases have reduced because the Trust is engaging in conversations with LAs about what constitutes Early Help.</p> <p>AC asked why Craggs has the highest number of children on CP? CEO replied that this is due to the higher number of children on roll at this school and in this area of Maltby there are high numbers of sibling groups who are put on the CP register together.</p>	
<p>5.5 HR Scorecard</p> <p>MS has populated the document with more detail since the last meeting of this Committee.</p> <p>This term we have stepped up in terms of monitoring staff absence, doing meetings and getting outcomes and this shows in the September scorecard. The number of meetings and sanctions has doubled from July. We do not yet have data for November but MS expects this to show an uplift from the drop in October. New schools are now on board so the number of staff across the Trust has increased but the number of absence days has reduced, largely due to more rigorous monitoring and following up by Headteachers.</p>	

<p>MS explained that there are still difficulties with data in terms of BAME and disability and we are looking at getting software that links with Bromcom and our payroll system which we should be able to report on properly and look at live information.</p> <p>PC asked if there is any particular reason why the sanctions at Hilltop, Kelford and North Ridge are as high as they are? MS explained that we are moving through the stages of the absence procedure and the Heads at Hilltop and North Ridge are rigorously following up any absences. These schools employ the highest number of staff and had the highest number of pupils in school during the pandemic and Headteachers were required to be more flexible about absence during that time.</p> <p>MS reported that we have a lot of part-time staff who work at Hilltop so this affects the data significantly when they are off. The new data will show absence in relation to FTE as well as number of people.</p> <p>GA asked about gender imbalances in staff and whether more males can be encouraged into SEN education. Could this be debated at a future meeting? The CEO feels that this is not an issue at the moment and noted that more males are entering the profession as TA salaries have increased. The apprenticeship programmes we have introduced have also helped with this.</p> <p>MS explained that the total workforce of the Trust is 1041 and this is actual staff, not FTEs.</p> <p>MS to circulate the new scorecard to members of this committee and will include apprentices in this document.</p>	<p>ACTION: MS 27.03.23</p>
<p>5.6 Risk Register</p> <p>No issues raised. Directors accepted the risk register without any further amendments being required.</p>	
<p>5.7 Minutes of the Schools' Performance and Scrutiny Board</p> <p>Comments were invited from the minutes of these meetings.</p> <p>AC asked whether this new system is beginning to see any impact, or is it too early to say? The CEO explained that the system is already showing an impact and is giving us a triangulated view of the health of our schools which has allowed us to support two schools in particular in ways that we may not have done in the past.</p> <p>The CEO explained that the format for the next round of meetings will be that the first meeting will look at all schools, and the second will look in more detail at schools who are receiving intervention support from the Trust.</p>	
<p>6. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS</p>	

<p>6.1. To consider any other urgent business agreed by the Chair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trust Handbook and Procurement Handbook and links to CIPS PEP (raised by GA). <p>GA feels that the Trust should not be doing anything that cannot be linked back to teaching and learning. The Trust Handbook contains a section on procurement and GA feels there is a potential misalignment between the sector, DfE, and how this links back to our learning standards. GA is working on this issue externally at the moment and will report back to this Committee in due course.</p> <p>The CEO explained that the Academy Trust Handbook sets the minimum standards required and we have been working with the PEP to work to a higher standard, so he does not feel there is a conflict in this issue. Agreed that the CEO and GA will discuss outside of this meeting and bring any issues back to the Committee in due course.</p>	<p>ACTION: GA/CEO 27/03/23</p>
<p>7. CONFIDENTIALITY</p>	
<p>7.1. To consider the confidentiality of any items discussed during the meeting</p> <p>No items were deemed to be confidential.</p>	
<p>7.2. To consider any areas of risk discussed in the meeting</p> <p>None raised.</p>	
<p>8. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS</p>	

Monday 27 th March 2023	5 – 7pm	MS Teams
Monday 17 th July 2023	5 – 7pm	MS Teams

Minutes approved by Trust Board of Directors

CHAIR	SIGNATURE	DATE