



Standards Committee Meeting
Monday 27th March 2023 at 17:00 – 19:00
via MS Teams

Those Present:		
Peter Castleton	Director /Chair	PC
Gillian Askew	Director	GA
Andrew Child	Member/Chair of Board of Directors	AC
Also Present:		
Warren Carratt	Chief Executive Officer	CEO
Jacky Tattershall	Assistant CEO – Quality Assurance & Improvement	JT
Michelle Smith	HR Manager	MS
Richard Webster	Strategic Development Lead	RW
Amanda Hobson	Extended Schools Service Manager (for item 5.1)	AH
Julie Westwood	Governance & Policy Manager - Clerk	JW
Apologies:		
Rachael Booth	Advisor	RB
Mark Greenwood	Director	MG

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	Actions
1.1. To receive, but not accept, apologies for absence Apologies were received from RB and MG.	
1.2. To accept apologies for absence Apologies were accepted for RB and MG.	
2. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS	
2.1. Chair to determine any items of urgent business to be considered There were no items of urgent business.	
3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	
3.1. Individual Governors to declare any personal, business or other governance interests on any item on the agenda There were no declarations of personal or business interest received.	
4. APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES	
4.1. To approve the minutes of the following meeting: The minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 5 th December 2022 were agreed and signed. The Clerk will finalise these minutes and send them to the Chair for signing.	Clerk 1st April 2023
4.2. Review of Action Tracker The outstanding actions on the tracker were reviewed and updated.	
4.3. Matters arising from the Minutes CEO suggested that the feedback from the Nexus Conference be deferred until the July meeting, though provided verbal feedback to the Committee.	CEO 17th July 2023
5. ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED	
5.1. AH delivered a presentation and report. She explained: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The position related to each local authority; • Funding streams for both After School Clubs and Holiday Clubs and the related pressures; • Actions taken when events have been oversubscribed; • Issues related to After School Clubs that have been affected during and post Covid; • That approval has been obtained to be a provider in Barnsley; • Working with The Willows school related to Universal Youth Grant in order to address unmet needs in the area; 	

- Family Voice and feedback from pupils;
- Challenges include staffing, buildings (suitability and off school site locations), demand, commissioner funding and transport;
- Successes included Dance at Heatherwood, Children’s University Passport, Increased availability of places, advancement of opportunities in Doncaster and Barnsley.

PC thanked Amanda for her work and the excellent enthusiastic presentation. PC commented that it was a very positive narrative and opened the invitation for questions.

AC also praised the report and pictures of activities. **AC asked if the clubs were just open to Nexus pupils or whether their sibling were able to join.** Amanda said they were open to siblings as long as they also had SEND.

AC asked if there were any plans for activities in the Nottinghamshire area. Amanda said it was on the Trust’s radar and she had already been to Fountaindale School to scope their facilities.

GA also praised the report and asked about links with Aiming High and Short Breaks. Amanda confirmed that anything over 2 hours duration is classed as a short break, similar to the former Aiming High provision, and that the provision for RMBC is commissioned from that grant.

GA asked about the feedback slide that referred to pupils being “happy most of the time” and asked why not all of the time. Amanda explained that for some children attending the After School Clubs can be a very long day and this could affect how they feel. The venue can also affect how pupils feel, and this can be helped by events being held off school sites, though this does have potential issues if the venue is not equipped to meet the needs of the attendees.

CEO explained that other sites might become available and gave examples of the Rowan Centre, but that this was an example of a venue not being completely suitable for those pupils who are physically disabled. The Willows School will become another resource when they join Nexus. CEO also explained the discussions related to The Source as a multiple-provision site which, if we are successful in negotiations, could be used for multiple types of provision as well as being the Nexus Head Office.

PC asked about provision in Sheffield. Amanda explained that Discovery staff are doing some voluntary After School Clubs and Becton are planning Easter Clubs.

PC closed the discussion and thanked Amanda for her enthusiasm and presentation, which all had found really worthwhile. Amanda was asked to send the presentation to Julie (Clerk), who would ensure it was circulated to the Committee via Governor Hub.

**AH
30th March
2023**

**Clerk
31st March
2023**

5.2 Standards Committee Report

JT explained that the report was the narrative to the CSIF delivery plan which was the next item on the agenda. She went on to explain the activity related to:

- Continued Professional Learning & Development (CPLD) including the whole Trust Conference, 19 Networking Groups and a Focus Group related to Career progression
- The launch of the Training Directory, which is being piloted with 9 courses after Easter, before being fully launched and rolled out more extensively in September 2023
- Evidence based research being led by Darren Dickinson focussing on action research programmes
- Work with The Education Endowment Foundation

JT further explained the Quality Assurance work that is ongoing across all schools and commented on:

- Pupil Premium and PE & Sport Premium audits which have taken place and has resulted in one school needing further support to meet requirements
- The second of four Support & Challenge visits, which involve deep dives into data and processes. These feed into and out of the school Self Evaluations (SEF) and pupil progress.
- External Reviews of all schools in the Ofsted window, checking the school SEF and HQ's quality assurance is accurate.

JT talked about the Trust wide Olympics which for secondary aged pupils is being held on 25th April requested by the Trust Pupil Cabinet.

Reference was also made to the support being provided to schools outside Nexus including, Bents Green, Toll Bar and St Pius as well as the work with Hunters Bar and explained that the Trust has been approached by Grimm & Co., a registered charity whose core purpose is to change lives one at a time for children and young people aged 0 to 18, encouraging improvements in confidence and skill around creativity and writing.

PC thanked JT for her report and commented that the reporting is becoming tighter over time.

GA commented on the recent tragedy of the Headteacher of a school following an Ofsted Inspection, that had been in the press recently. **GA asked how staff were feeling emotionally about Ofsted and whether the preparatory work was helping.** JT explained that many of the Headteachers ask for validation to increase their confidence, some more than others and referred to the Head at Pennine View asking for more support recently.

GA asked how much extra time it takes over and above the normal working day. CEO explained that it is all part of the Trust governance system and referred to schools being judged as Requires Improvement (RI) in the dashboard and recent actions related to some Headteachers. CEO further explained that the inspection framework is

<p>just testing the school’s everyday “bread and butter”. The Trust offers coaching so that Heads don’t become defensive in inspection, and referred to the recent inspection at Beech as an example of the preparatory work in action, and its impact. JT further explained that anything in relation to Ofsted readiness is provided at the request of the Head and the everyday support and challenge has led to Heads sharing their learning experiences.</p> <p>CEO added that nothing we do requires us to parachute in when Ofsted arrive, but we will become more strident in the need for our presence on site.</p> <p>PC stated that Quality Assurance is our core business but asked if the staff accepted our feedback. CEO described the inference and perspective related to the recent tragedy associated with the Headteacher suicide in Berkshire but stressed that that school was a stand-alone maintained school with likely different support to schools in our MAT.</p> <p>PC said that we need to be satisfied that this is not affecting staff. CEO responded by saying that Ofsted is part of what Headteachers expect and that he is confident that we don’t have any Heads who are unduly concerned to the point where it is impacting on their wellbeing.</p>	
<p>5.3 CSIF Delivery Plan</p> <p>AC referred to 4.6 in the document and asked about the Deep Dives – who is involved, how they are reported to the Board, and how will you know they are successful? JT acknowledged the challenges related to how Directors can be assured that outcomes are the best ones. She thinks this will have to go back to the processes that are involved, perhaps construct an audit to look at the process involved and invite Directors to participate. AC asked about a suggested timeline and JT suggested September 2023.</p> <p>AC further enquired if the processes were standardised. JT confirmed that they are but that there may be differences in the way they are delivered, tailored to circumstances.</p> <p>AC asked about section 2.8 and the English & Maths groups. JT acknowledged that they are hard to manage and that she needs to give consideration as to how they can operate without her. AC asked about the Maths Consultant, who are they and why do we need one? JT explained that Emma Parker has been appointed and starts in September (she is currently Maths Teacher at Bader Academy). As Maths is a core subject for colleges, internships and apprenticeships it was felt that more needed to be done and it is based on the success of the model used in Michelle Hill’s post related to Phonics/English.</p> <p>AC asked about section 1.7 related to National Partner – Absence Matters Delivery Plan. CEO reported that Paula Williams has led on absence this year and she has engaged with Wayne Harris, acknowledged as an “Attendance Guru”.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">JT September 2023</p>

<p>PC asked about attendance and absenteeism in schools and acknowledged that this is heightened for SEND children. It was noted that Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham are all high. PC asked if there was some way that the Standards Committee could be kept abreast with more sophisticated analysis. JT advised that Paula Williams interrogates the data and feeds it into the Schools Performance & Scrutiny Board. CEO agreed that it is considered in detail and urged caution going forward. The detailed work has been delegated to officers and CEO asked Directors to reflect on what they receive and why, so as to avoid duplication.</p> <p>PC confirmed that they are looking for headline data and not detail, then asked colleagues for their views.</p> <p>AC said he would appreciate more discussion regarding what data Directors need and posed the question about whether they are looking for reams of data or reporting by exception. He suggested this was a bigger discussion and the question was “where do you stop?”</p> <p>GA agreed that we need to avoid duplication and that we don’t want to create an industry around this, especially as we grow.</p> <p>PC asked about the best way forward. CEO suggested a task and finish meeting consisting of two Directors and Jacky. He is happy to be involved if his diary commitments allow. JT and PC will pick this up initially and others can be invited if they so wish. They will develop a proposal and bring this back to the next meeting.</p> <p>AC questioned whether a deep dive would create more work. CEO suggested high level information focussing on the best and worst performance and questioned the value in looking at data.</p> <p>PC made a final point stating that he was encouraged by all the collaborative research work and the need to make sure that staff get the proper recognition for their contributions.</p>	<p>JT/PC 17th July 2023</p>
<p>5.4 CSIF “Big 3” Performance Indicators/Measures</p> <p>JT explained that Phil Marshall and Nick Whittaker identified a disconnect between the strategic dashboard and the KPIs, when they carried out the external review. In order to address how Directors could be assured, she has cross referenced the KPIs and linked these to the Big 3.</p> <p>This document will be included as an appendix to all future CSIF delivery plan reports.</p>	<p>JT 17 July 2023</p>
<p>5.5 Dashboard Report – Confidential Report</p> <p>CEO gave the context for the report and ordinarily this will go to the Board first and then Standards. However, the sequencing of meetings now means that Standards Committee receive the report first.</p>	

<p>AC questioned the financial stability of Becton and why this has reduced. CEO gave assurance that although the pressures of the school had wiped out the surplus, that they were managing it and seeking to address the issues.</p> <p>AC queried the Dashboard reference to Bader recruitment & retention and decline to RI. CEO referred to changes in leadership which had led to staff expectations and higher standards being introduced. It was also noted that an Assistant Head had left and a new Deputy Head is being recruited. CEO also said that he was satisfied with some of the staff who had chosen to leave, and referred back to the Maths teacher who was leaving to take up the Trust consultant post. The CEO expects to see improvements by the Summer Term.</p>	
<p>5.6 Schools in receipt of Intervention Report</p> <p>CEO referenced the report which had been circulated earlier. CEO reported that not every school recognises the advent of early intervention but the Trust is clear about what it provides, and why. CEO referred to two recent Headteacher changes, and that direct and open conversations had taken place leading up to that point.</p> <p>AC asked about the drop to RI at Hilltop in two areas. CEO stated that the narrative from school was consistent with the judgement.</p> <p>PC asked if the process was accepted and understood and asked if there had been any kickback from taking away the autonomy. CEO confirmed there had been no problems and an example was the Head at Pennine View who had sought support. CEO reported that this fundamentally hinges on the way we operate and that Heads accept this in the main. Only one had found this difficult and was not willing to work with the Trust.</p>	
<p>5.7 Safeguarding and LAC Report</p> <p>CEO reported that there were no huge changes despite 4 additional settings. Gatekeeping had improved and although referrals to LADO were high, the CEO and PC had discussed this. The issues related to LAC have to be responsive.</p> <p>GA asked about the number of children with early help and wondered what drives the numbers to fluctuate with this magnitude. CEO stated that there was no data set to compare nationally. He reported that Victoria Morris has been doing some work with the Doncaster LA around their requirements being unnecessary and this had led to a change in policy.</p> <p>PC commented that he was not alarmed by the numbers related to early help as they are more likely to fluctuate.</p>	
<p>5.8 HR Scorecard</p> <p>MS introduced the new look scorecard which held more information than before. The report includes January and February and so has overlapped slightly with Spring 2. MS</p>	

<p>confirmed that she had implemented what had been asked for in terms of a more detailed breakdown.</p> <p>MS highlighted that there are now 22 apprentices, but that only 2 are males. RW reported that there was now an additional one as of tomorrow, a Site Apprentice. MS reported that Joanna Hedge has met with Doncaster College to encourage more male apprentice applications.</p> <p>MS reported drops in staffing, particularly at Hilltop and Coppice. She confirmed that the Hilltop vacancies had occurred over a period of four months and explained the context. In relation to Coppice a number of part time staff had moved on and this was now stabilising.</p> <p>MS confirmed that Becton and Kenwood data is now spilt so this has affected the numbers.</p> <p>MS is confident that the workforce is stable. There are a number of teaching staff over 65 staff which gives a wealth of experience. In contrast, there are quite a number of under 30s. Abbey and Kelford have the most Early Career Teachers (ECTs)/Teachers. Crag is about to lose one of their leadership team.</p> <p>MS reported on staff absences and pointed out that the figures look high as they are for two months. Specifically, some long-term absences will be concluded by the end of the Spring Term. Abbey has experienced high maternity leave and Pennine View suffered a Covid outbreak.</p> <p>More absence meetings are taking place in schools since the training has been completed and MS is awaiting feedback about these. Sanctions were being taken and it is a case of following the policy as it is a fair and transparent process. MS reported that there is one potential dismissal tomorrow related to persistent absence.</p> <p>PC asked if you were asked to take the temperature of the organisation would you say it is healthy? MS confirmed that it is. Things like the Nexus conference help, together with networking, as it puts names and faces together. She confirmed that all is well apart from a couple of bumpy issues.</p> <p>AC asked about the recruitment and retention figures relating to Becton. MS confirmed there was an error in mathematical calculation and she will re-calculate this.</p> <p>GA asked about the financial consequences of staff absence as well as the educational impact. MS confirmed that she can obtain the figures. She explained the 80/20 ratio of non-teaching/teaching staff and the cover arrangements through Bank Teaching Assistants and facilities staff covering for each-other had reduced slippage.</p> <p>CEO confirmed that we try not to use supply staff. PC said it would be helpful to see what costs were involved and whether some figures might be better expressed as a percentage.</p>	<p>MS for next report to 17th July Meeting</p> <p>MS for next report to 17th July meeting</p>
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MS concluded that we should be very proud of our workforce and reported that Coppice had just lost an 80-year-old member of their workforce due to ill health. MS was thanked for her report.	
5.9 Risk Register CEO reported that this had been reported to the Audit & Risk Committee on 6 th March 2023. Changes has been highlighted and there was a new reference to Cybersecurity. Comments were invited but none received.	
5.10 Minutes of the Spring Term Schools' Performance & Scrutiny Board. The minutes were received with no questions arising.	
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 Item 5.5 above is confidential.	
7.2. To consider any areas of risk discussed in the meeting None.	
8. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS	

Monday 17 th July 2023	5 – 7pm	MS Teams
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Minutes approved by Trust Board of Directors

CHAIR	SIGNATURE	DATE