

**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**OF THE ACTIVE LEARNING TRUST**

***held on Tuesday 21st February 2017***

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

**MINUTES**

Directors: Ms L. Adams Mr D. Bateson

 Mrs J. Cutchey Mr G. Hely-Hutchinson

Mr M. Kerr Ms M. Lloyd

 Mr G. Peile Mr S. Staite

 Ms M. Toft

Members: Mrs H. Capron Mr R. Dool

Invited Officers: Mr D. Hilton Mr C. Paskell

Invited Headteachers: Ms S. Dobbs (Burrowmoor Primary School)

Mrs A. Robertson (Kingsfield Primary School)

Mrs A. McCormick (Cambridgeshire Hub Lead)

Invited Guests Mrs A. Rice (Chief Executive & Exec Headteacher of Acorn MAT)

**21.** **WELCOME & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Ms Adams welcomed all present. Apologies for absence were accepted from Mr C. Bush and Mr J. Beswick. Mrs Rice was introduced as chief executive and executive headteacher of the Acorn multi-academy trust, and she had been invited to attend as an observer to share good practice. No new declarations of interest were declared.

**22. REPORT & PRESENTATION FROM BURROWMOOR & KINGSFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE HUB LEAD**

Directors confirmed that they had reviewed the Headteacher Reports that Ms Dobbs and Mrs Robertson had provided prior to the meeting. Both were asked to highlight areas of particular note:

 **Ms Dobbs: Burrowmoor Primary School**

* Ms Dobbs has been at Burrowmoor since September 2016. She has introduced some changes and feels the school is moving forward. Strengths and areas for improvement have been identified, and staff are “Aiming for Excellence”. The board noted that the school had been in special measures but had improved to requires improvement at its last inspection. Mr Peile explained the excellent work of Jason Wing and Anne McCarthy in their roles of executive headteacher and interim headteacher prior to Ms Dobbs starting at the school.
* Parents are more engaged than previously
* The school budget is healthy and well-managed
* An Interim Deputy Head appointed by the Trust, is working closely with the head
* KS2 results are above national and LA targets for attainment – floor standards reached – however progress could be better
* Staff have received training in Ofsted expectations and Framework
* The staffing structure is being revisited as there are currently no middle leaders
* SATS targets are achievable
* Ms Dobbs vision included Burrowmoor having a Children’s University that will focus on gifted and talented pupils

Mr Kerr asked about the number of fixed term exclusions, which at 23 (compared with 2 for Kingsfield) seemed high. Ms Dobbs explained that these relate to pupils whose behaviour has been allowed to escalate. She stated that behaviour is generally good at Burrowmoor now, and this has been recognised by Ofsted. The FEX relate to a couple of pupils whose behaviour needed addressing.

Mrs Cutchey asked if learning behaviours are a strength at Burrowmoor. Ms Dobbs replied that they are now.

Mrs Cutchey asked for an indication of the children working at greater depth. Ms Dobbs replied that this is currently around 15%.

In response to the heads report, Ms Adams asked if children are “working harder” or if the “work is harder”, and what is provided extra for more able pupils. Ms Dobbs stated that both were true. She went on to say that children did not have a clear climate for learning, but they do now. Expectations and areas have been standardised across the school. Clearer goals have been introduced, with achievable targets, booster classes and interventions from Neale-Wade.

Mr Hely-Hutchinson asked what the ALT view is on the middle management structure and interim deputy head situation. Mr Hilton replied that the team needs to be built to compliment the strengths of the headteacher, used for day-to-day operational matters and oversee behaviour and assessment. Assistant heads should oversee the phase leads and manage the middle leadership structure. Burrowmoor need to look at developing staff, and grow from within. Mr Peile explained the background at Burrowmoor, where middle leaders in place were not performing at the level required and so the structure was revised in order to improve performance. He stated that if the structure is revised again clear lines of responsibility need to be established.

Ms Adams asked how Ms Dobbs would measure whether changes are effective and will staff remain the same. Ms Dobbs advised that this would be through monitoring (teaching = learning = outcomes), empowering people in the right roles and effective Performance Management Reviews. She went on to say that no performance management had taken place during the summer term prior to her arrival, but this has been addressed. Ms Dobbs confirmed that she expected the people to remain the same, but may ‘tweak’ job titles and roles. Mr Peile commented that it is important that the parental understanding of the leadership structure and individual responsibilities is improved as this has been lacking in the past.

Mrs Cutchey asked about the number of staff at both schools. Kingsfield is 18 teachers and 41 support, with Burrowmoor having 23 teachers and 67 support. Ms Dobbs stated that Burrowmoor’s figures included a large number of midday supervisors, and some TAs who have left. Mrs Robertson stated that the Kingsfield numbers meet the needs of the school as a whole, and has a difference situation than Burrowmoor.

Mr Dool asked about the role of the executive head. Ms Dobbs stated that this has been removed so that she, as substantive head, could stamp her own authority on school. She added that she feels it is important for parents to see that the school is moving forward on its own, and that staff have a clear understanding of who to report to. She stated that the potential for confusion is now removed, which she felt was undermining her authority in school. Mr Peile confirmed that, during the time of executive headteacher being in role, there was clarity locally on roles and responsibilities.

Mr Peile concluded the discussion on Burrowmoor by stating that great strides have been made in the last year, with Mr Wing and Mrs McCormick introducing good structures that Ms Dobbs has inherited.

 **Mrs Robertson: Kingsfield Primary School**

* Mrs Robertson joined Kingsfield 3+ terms ago as an interim deputy following reviews facilitated by ALT that showed significant concern in foundation stage and teaching and learning. Directors noted the report on the school and discussions took place which included discussions around the following points:
* Kingsfield was originally graded as inadequate, but is on a journey to good
* In a reasonable condition financially
* A feeling of “Team Kingsfield” is now evident amongst staff with all pulling together to improve
* Some staff have moved on, allowing school to appoint strong middle leaders
* Mrs Robertson was made interim head in the September 2016 and a strong deputy was appointed
* Chatteris is a wide and diverse community – incidents of emotional issues have risen, and a member of staff is to be appointed to support the strong work that the Family Engagement Officer undertakes with parents
* Strong Behaviour for Learning has been introduced and a culture of praise has shown impact with pupils motivated and keen to learn
* Last summer’s Year 6 did not make attainment figures, but did make progress which was shown by the school being above the Government’s baseline. Mrs Robertson is hopeful for this year’s SATS. FFT is predicting mid-50’s but school assessment is already showing higher. Hope to make national standards this year, although there are 3 children in Year 6 with significant issues.
* There have been key developments in foundation stage, with a change of staff and 73% showing GLD. Baseline data was previously non-existent, but is now in place. FS teacher is working proactively with pre-school settings.
* Staffing issues include a member of staff causing concern, and previous lack of support for NQTs. Staff CPD is now linked to PM and more focused.
* Tracking systems and links with progress now strong. Each child is looked at individually.
* Mrs Robertson advocated working within the Trust, allowing schools to have “ears to the ground” and substantial support. She stated that she will be sorry to leave – the new headteacher recruitment will be key in taking Kingsfield on the next steps towards excellence.

Mr Peile gave background to Kingsfield having taken on a bulge year which will have a knock-on effect. There are several scenarios around what will happen to pupils this year (as Chatteris schools are full) and ALT have been holding meetings with the local authority to discuss the best way forward.

Mrs Cutchey asked if there were any vacancies at the moment that directors could support with. Mrs Robertson confirmed that there is a full staffing compliment at the moment but recognised that a couple of teachers did need additional support

Ms Toft reiterated Mrs Robertson’s view of the Family Engagement Worker – she is excellent. This is an area that Ms Toft believes should be expanded to other schools.

**Mrs McCormick: Cambridgeshire Hub Lead**

* Mrs McCormick has been Hub Lead since April 2016
* There are six schools in the Cambridgeshire Hub, including a special school
* Although the Hub is spread out, the schools work together well, as exampled by a recent teacher training day where all schools attended training at Neale-Wade.
* Hub meetings are supportive
* A standards group has been established, which will be led by Joy Parke
* Staff are able to be shared across schools

Ms Lloyd asked what the Trust could do to support the Cambridgeshire Hub. Mrs McCormick thinks that the Trust should make more of the opportunities offered (particularly during recruitment) that staff can access in other schools – this makes the Trust unique.

Mr Peile spoke highly of Mrs Robertson and the work she has led at Kingsfield. He stated that some of the Board members will be visiting Kingsfield in March to see for themselves the phenomenal progress.

Ms Adams thanked Ms Dobbs, Mrs Robertson and Mrs McCormick for their attendance. Ms Dobbs and Mrs Robertson left the meeting at this point.

**23.** **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 13th DECEMBER 2016**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13th December 2016 were accepted as a true record, with Mr Bateson asking that it be made clear that his comment under item 16, re schools not being able to be considered full, related to special schools.

Matters Arising: Item 11. Westwood Primary School will be inspected on 22nd & 23rd February 2017.

**24.** **MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**

***Finance & Audit Committee (13.12.16)***

The Minutes of the Finance & Audit Committee meeting that was held on 13th December were accepted by directors.

**25. CHAIR’S ACTIONS**

Ms Adams updated directors on three items that she had approved under the urgent action process since the last meeting. Details and reports had been circulated and the following were noted and agreed.

 ***Appointment of Chair of Governors at Reydon Primary School***

Approval of the appointment of Celia Eldridge as Chair of Governors at Reydon Primary School

 ***Authorisation of Loan Agreement for Gusford Primary School***

 Approval of a loan agreement for the project to replace windows at Gusford Primary School

 ***Update of Trust Safeguarding Policy***

Acceptance of updates to the Trust Safeguarding Policy to reflect the Prevent Strategy and training around FGM and transgender students.

**27. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

Mr Peile informed directors that, due to the age of the Trust, some Trust governors are nearing the end of their term of office. He asked Directors to approve that he reappoint governors as necessary. ***Directors agreed this was the best way forward.***

Mr Peile informed directors that a representative from the Regional School Commissioners Office may be attending the next Board meeting. Some directors may be contacted prior to this, although it is not known what will be asked.

Mr Bateson volunteered to be the named director for SEND, as required by DfE regulations that came into being on 16th January 2017. The board confirmed this appointment

**26. REPORT ON SCHOOL & HUB PROGRESS & STANDARDS**

 **CONFIDENTIAL**

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

 **CONFIDENTIAL**

**29. NEXT MEETING**

To confirm the date of the next meeting as 2nd May 2017.