



TRUST BOARD LEARNING COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Learning Committee of the Trust Board of South East Cornwall Multi Academy Regional Trust held 4th November 2024 at 6.30 pm.

Present	Yes/No	In attendance	Yes/No
Mr J Crisp - Chair	Yes	Mr D Buckley, CEO	Yes
Mr L Hallam	Apologies	Ms K Williams, Clerk to Trust Board	Yes
Dr J Traverse	Yes	Mrs J Eason, CST Observer	Yes

- Welcome**
The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- Declaration of Business or Pecuniary Interest and Academy-related parties - update on any changes since completion of written declaration**
There were no changes
- Apologies for Absence**
Mr Hallam had sent his apologies in advance of the meeting which were received and accepted.
- Approval of minutes of meeting held on 17-06-2024**
The minutes of the meeting held on 17th June 2024 having been circulated in advance, were agreed as an accurate record.
- Matters Arising**
M48. LGC minutes
Mr Buckley advised that we had a link meeting system whereby all governors met with a link trustee and these meetings were used for training and Mr Buckley attended. We changed this and moved to a secondary and primary model so that there could be more open discussions. It was noted that we had some meetings where there were individuals who were vocal and led the agendas. We have discussed this with those concerns and this has been addressed.

M40. Discuss the current measures for HR required by Trustees and consider if changes are needed to track risk factors associated with recruitment and turnover
We have decided to offer exit interviews and will be collecting the reasons for leaving as part of a questionnaire. We will also have an annual questionnaire for staff and currently over 90% of staff are happy and have had good experiences. The lowest scores from the survey were at Looe and we have identified an issue and put measures in place to address this. **A Trustee asked if there are key themes for turnover of staff.** Mr Buckley advised that there have been reasons given such as moving house or changing jobs rather than leaving because they are unhappy. We have polled staff about schools consulting them on changes in the workplace and we introduced the Harts ladder three years ago. This year we have scored 68% when we asked this question so we are still not getting this right although we have made significant progress but this is still not at our 100% target. **A Trustee asked if the exit interviews have been approved by Trustees and are in use.** We don't have an agreed exit process currently which we are working on but within this structure will include asking for the reasons why they have left.

M47. Headteacher's Reports – are there any questions to raise on the red areas of the reports. Consider if there are any deep dives required at a future meeting

b) A Trustee asked why there is so much red. Mr Buckley suggested that the Trust tab provides Trust wide data and the spring data shows there is a drop in data for number on roll for Landulph and Dobwalls. It was found after further discussion that there is an issue with the spreadsheet on some devices. It was agreed that a PDF version of this document would be circulated. If there are any further questions on this, Trustees can email Mr Buckley.

Update: Complete.

6. Standing agenda item: Risk Register: Progress on any new or emerging risks and risk monitoring

A document was circulated in advance of the meeting. From this:

- a) Mr Buckley advised Looe has been visited by Ofsted so they need to update the Risk Register. In the first set of committee meetings, we found that the schools had not correctly completed the most recent version of the Risk Register.
- b) Pupil numbers are highlighted red for Trewidland, Landulph and Saltash. We need to ensure that we keep parents engaged. All the risks fall into slightly less or a slightly increased concern but there are no significant changes to risk.

7. Consider the SEND Information Reports and SEND Offer

Documents were circulated in advance of the meeting. From these:

- a) Mr Buckley advised that we have aligned the SEND Information Reports across the Trust and these have been agreed by the SEND group. There is shared SEND expertise across the primary schools and we have a direct line to the SEND network in Cornwall.
- b) We have been used as an exemplary for a recent SEND review. Trustees have deep dived into the Trauma Informed Schools approach in our schools. Mr Buckley advised that nationally we are around 4 billion short for SEND support so we are not meeting needs as a system but we are taking an active role in shaping this in Cornwall.

8. Receive analysis of performance of the disadvantaged groups compared to non-disadvantaged and review the Pupil Premium evaluations from last year for each school

- a) Mr Buckley advised that the national picture is that the majority of funding is being used for budgetary issues in schools. In our schools the PP (Pupil Premium) funding is being used predominately for staffing.
- b) The level of evaluation of the impact of projects for the disadvantaged gap is currently inadequate. We have worked on evaluation and are making sure we have much more well defined methods. There are now very clear SDPs (School Development Plans) with a one page summary which has milestones. We will be having a secondary cross subject analysis so we have qualitative data so that we can compare students across the Trust. We will have ranking in place to give us confidence on what is working.
- c) Attendance does affect the disadvantaged group and we have seen progress in this area. The work of the EWOs (Educational Welfare Officers) is commendable and we now have baseline attendance in place.
- d) **A Trustee asked if there are any measures in place to mitigate against in year risk.** Mr Buckley advised we could have mitigations in place such as removing bias or seating plans which are EEF suggestions but there is no data to suggest that these work. We have identified the main issue is the gaps in understanding but we have not found a reliable way of closing these gaps. We need to have reliability in teaching so we are working to have disruption free classrooms and improved attendance. We then want to give teachers support to identify the gaps.

- e) **A Trustee referred to attendance, EHE (Elected Home Educated), SEND and PP and asked is there any linear regression links and if that is the case, does this lead to interventions.** Mr Buckley advised there is a link and the primaries do well with supporting this. Secondary schools have more issues with this and we need to have a baseline in place and then support for students will use a set of tried and tested strategies.
- f) **A Trustee asked about the link between SEND, their attendance and the choice to EHE.** Mr Buckley advised that this is complex and summarised the pattern of behaviour seen leading up to the decision to EHE. We need to be persistent in getting students back into education. We have tried an innovative way of online learning but this has been criticized.
- g) **A Trustee noted the impact to students who have been taken out of school to be EHE multiple times and asked what support is in place for those that have then been returned to school.** Mr Buckley advised that in some circumstances we have had complaints made to Ofsted and the Local Authority. We need to ensure that there is a continued message that the children would be best off in the school and there is a learning environment which is safe and welcoming for them. The number of children being EHE is larger than in recent years.
- h) **A Trustee asked if our number of EHE is comparable to other Trusts.** Mr Buckley advised that whilst numbers are high, it is in line with other schools. We have better systems in place now to improve attendance earlier which should help with keeping students in school. The data for EHE is included in the Headteachers Report. Some benchmarks are out of date and so where the national picture is changing our data will be highlighted as red.

9. Review of Policies

- a) None.

10. Headteacher's Reports – consider if any areas need a deeper dive in future meetings

Documents were circulated in advance of the meeting. From these:

- a) **A Trustee noted that robust reports are being provided. A Trustee asked if there are any themes which require a deep dive.** Mr Buckley advised that this report is reviewed in November and the key indicators are RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rated. Attendance is still a key issue. The number of EHE is green and within benchmark although this was picked up as an issue in Looe as they had 8 which has increased to 10 which caused a concern. Trustees need to consider if the red areas are being challenged and scrutinised by the local governors sufficiently and regularly.
- b) **A Trustee noted we have always focused on the red areas on reports and asked how does the sharing of best practice happen across the Trust.** Mr Buckley advised that this is covered in SMART day and we bring the Middle Leaders together in June and they decide on a focus for attention for the November inset day.
- c) **A Trustee asked about opportunity for peer on peer observations.** Mr Buckley advised that we have peer review during concept reviews, safeguarding reviews and within the SEND group. The appraisal system is set up so that line managers don't need to be the mentors which is useful.
- d) **A Trustee asked about last year's data being used for a baseline to assess risk and could this approach be flawed.** Mr Buckley advised that it can be challenging for governors to pick out meaningful questions on the red areas on the Headteacher's Report. Mrs Eason noted that Trust Boards have the overall oversight and responsibility and there needs to be more meaningful discussions rather than a broader conversation.
- e) **A Trustee asked what the key areas for deep dives would be.** Mr Buckley suggested that Pupil Premium (PP) and what does and does not work. Attendance is also key and we could provide an impact assessment as we have made good progress in attendance.

- f) **A Trustee asked if there is a dedicated working party for PP.** Mr Buckley advised we have someone with responsibility for this in each school. We could not currently provide Trustees with qualitative data in subjects at the moment.
- g) **A Trustee asked if we are in a position to do scholastic outcomes for SEND students.** Mr Buckley advised that we could provide this and our SEND provision has been commended following external scrutiny. **A Trustee felt a deep dive into what is not working in this area would be useful.** Mr Buckley felt there were more difficulties in terms of behaviour and attendance for SEND. In terms of learning environment, what is happening in classrooms is generally good.
- h) It was agreed that Pupil Premium would be the next deep dive. The Clerk will add to the agenda.

Action: The Clerk

11. Guidance/instructions to LGCs

- a) Looe has been visited by Ofsted. There were many positives and action plans are already in place.
- b) The SEND Offer and SEND Information Reports have been aligned across the Trust.
- c) Governors need to ensure that they are asking sufficiently challenging questions on the red areas in the Headteachers reports, especially for those areas which are not improving over the year.
- d) The Learning Committee will be having a deep dive into Pupil Premium.

12. Summary of matters for the Trust Board

- a) There have been minimal changes to the Risk Register.
- b) The committee will be having a deep dive into Pupil Premium this year.
- c) The SEND Offer and SEND Information Reports have been aligned across the Trust.
- d) The gap for disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged is still a cause of concern. The Trust understands that the main issue is the gap in understanding. The schools are working on having disruption free classrooms and improved attendance so that we can then provide teachers with the support needed for identifying and closing the gaps.

13. Agreements made by email

- a) None.

14. Date of next meetings:

06-02-2025 and 04-06-2025 at 6pm.

Mr Buckley advised that Ofsted has been to visit Looe.

The meeting closed at 19.38pm.

Action Summary	
M10. Headteacher’s Reports – consider if any areas need a deeper dive in future meetings	Action: The Clerk
h) It was agreed that Pupil Premium would be the next deep dive. The Clerk will add to the agenda.	