

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES - ONLINE ZOOM MEETING**28th March 2024 – 3.30 p.m.****PRESENT**

Steph Donbavand	Sue Donnelly	Clare Gaskell (left 4.40 p.m.)
Mike McGarry – Headteacher	Harriett Michael-Phillips	Karen Owens - Chair
Paul Povey	Jim Rimmer	Collette Simms
Richard Snowdon		

ALSO PRESENT

Tom Dolly - SDHT	Gayle Phillips - DHT	Julie McGugan – AHT
Andy Pritchard – RD	Judith Gordon - FM	Pauline Neilson (Clerk)

24/60**WELCOME****ACTION**

The Head/Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

24/61**DECLARATION OF BUSINESS INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interests in relation to the agenda.

24/62**MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING – 01/02/24**

The minutes of the last meeting had been previously circulated and were agreed as a true and accurate record, subject to the following amendments:

Add paragraph – 24/48 – Headteachers report

“There followed a lengthy discussion on the fact that despite several remarks with improved grades in the GCSE exams, the 'below average' invalidated P8 score in this year's tables had not moved following the recent publication of the validated score. It was noted that the upper confidence interval of -0.08 had not shifted and therefore being below zero meant that the school position remained in the 'below average' category. Trustees and senior staff discussed various strategies that are in place this year to try and rectify this including our PRIME mentor group of students as well as subject initiatives focusing on individuals who are making below expected progress currently. Some of last year's poor progress rates could be attributed to poor attendance and a big increase in SEMH concerns but the profile of the progress rates was a key focus for teaching staff this year.”

24/63**MATTERS ARISING****4/48 – Headteacher’s Report – Southport Learning Trust (SLT)**

An Extra-Ordinary Trustee meeting has been arranged for 29 April 2024 at 3.30 p.m., to be held at the school. The Headteacher will check the start time with Ian Raikes (CEO of the SLT), who will also be in attendance at the meeting.

Time to be confirmed to Trustees

Changes to the Board of Trustees when Range joins the SLT will be discussed as part of this meeting. The Headteacher is keen for all trustees to continue serving on the Local Governing Board after 1 September.

24/52 - Attendance

Work is continuing to improve attendance figures and current attendance is just above 90%. However, last week Yr. 8 attendance was 83% which pulled down the overall figure. There had been a lot of illnesses at that time.

24/64 MINUTES FROM AUDIT/ RISK COMMITTEE – 23/01/24

The above Minutes had been circulated to trustees for information.

24/65 HEADTEACHER REPORT

This had been previously circulated and was taken as read with the following items highlighted:

There are still a number of pupils with Mental Health and wellbeing issues. One such pupil had recently been excluded for 4 days and although school recognised individual problems, it is a difficult balancing act.

Attendance – 83% in Y8, however school is still holding its own in Sefton.

The Option block has been finalised and in spite of financial difficulties, Range is able to offer a varied provision. GCSE Engineering had been offered for the first time this year and is proving to be very popular, as are Criminology and Politics in KS5.

Science – various concerns were discussed at the last meeting. A consultant has been in school this week to work with the Science staff. He is currently compiling a report that would be shared with Trustees after Easter. It is hoped this support would help the team. Martin Cousins (CAL-Physics) is starting after Easter.

Report to be shared with trustees

There are many activities planned; a ski trip and a trip to Nice over the Easter holiday. Following the problems at Dover with the ski trip last year, pupils are flying this time.

CIF bid – (see email sent from A Pritchard for details).

Confirmation of funding for the second phase of the Fire Safety work has been received. Work to date has had a great impact. With only 28% of CIF bids being successful, trustees congratulated everyone involved for this great result.

Numbers - September

6th form - 138

Y7 - 150 allocated

Trustees discussed the applications briefly. There have been fewer applications from the Southport and Crosby area, but it was recognised that Chesterfield had expanded significantly and this was having an impact on numbers applying elsewhere. There may be some more positive responses from the Ainsdale catchment area once the school

RANGE HIGH SCHOOL

joins the SLT. There are no real concerns moving forward, but Trustees agreed that there may be a need for more aggressive marketing.

Deep Dives – the process was moving on. The reviews should be ready by May half term and a report would follow.

School Development Plan - a draft version had been circulated, thanks were given to Senior Leadership Team for their contributions. It was recognised that the format of this plan this may change after the move to the SLT when a corporate format may be used.

The Head invited Trustees to send him any comments/queries.

Staffing

The CAL – French is leaving at the end of August and a replacement is being sought.

Question: How does this affect the balance of staffing in relation to the fact that all pupils are taking MFL?

Answer: This area was overstaffed when the initiative was first introduced and some pupils are not now taking any of the languages. Four MFL teaching staff will be reduced to three.

The Head of Drama is retiring from her post at the end of this academic year but would like to remain available for any suitable supply opportunities. An internal replacement Drama teacher is being planned.

Strikes - There are still concerns over strikes in The Bluecoat School, Liverpool and St Michael's, Crosby

OFSTED – discussions are ongoing about the one-word judgements. This may mean some changes.

MAT - Work is ongoing.

The TUPE meeting for all staff is taking place on 24 April. A separate meeting had been arranged with the TU representatives, but school has not received any confirmations of attendance to date.

It is expected that there will be changes within the school's Finance department, but, to date, no meetings have yet taken place.

Trustees thanked the Head for his detailed report.

FINANCE

Financial update, including the school fund, to the end of February 2024 had been circulated. There had not been many changes since the budget had been discussed by the Audit Committee in January.

Question: In relation to budgeting for next year and the expected £70k deficit, had Southport Learning Trust had any input into the budget setting?

Answer: Not at the moment, they are leaving the discussions to Range, but staffing issues will be discussed in the next few weeks. The Trust seems fairly relaxed about the process and school is awaiting developments.

Question: Has there been any more progress on sorting out the 5% top slice?

Answer: There has not been much movement, but there are some proposals about the possible use of staff in the Trust as part of the top slice. Changes are expected once agreed with the Trust, but no criteria has yet been given.

The ESFA had originally asked for the February and March 2024 accounts and the February accounts had been forwarded. There had been no comments except that the March accounts and subsequent months were not now required.

The original £70k deficit has been reduced to about £40k and there is still some ongoing work with the timetable, so figures are shifting all the time. The Resources Director is fairly confident that this would eventually be reduced to zero.

Question: What is the current situation with the school minibuses?

Answer: There had been three but the old LDV vehicle had been scrapped. There is a problem that younger members of staff are unable to drive the 2006 minibus due to its size; they are able to drive the newer leased minibus as it is smaller. The hope is to eventually lease a second minibus. The leased vehicles come with regular safety checks and the livery is fresh. There are no defects on the older minibus at this time.

24/66 KPI REPORT

Very detailed reports have been produced and circulated prior to the meeting and these were taken as read. The only changes were in the KS5 data. It is now much closer to the 2022 figures. It was recognised that the targets were aspirational, but the Data was going in the right direction.

An Easter school is taking place next month; interviews have taken place with 25 pupils whose grades were 2 grades below expected. Extra capacity has been put in and work is continuing. The figures are expected to improve following the interventions.

Question: What about value added from GCSE?

Answer: There is some uncertainty about value added at KS5, but there is much more confidence in the KS4 cohort. There were record GCSE results from this cohort, but it was the first group back after Covid and they had been given lots of additional support.

The DHT proceeded to outline details from the KS3 breakdown of groups – English Maths & Science and Literacy and Reading ages for Yr. 7 and 8.

The information on disadvantaged was highlighted and discussed briefly.

KS4 Attainment and Progression by subject, and KS5 Whole School Attainment targets as well as attainment targets by subject were noted.

Fixed term exclusions increased over the last 12 months and those involving girls had notably increased. It was suggested (JR) that it would be helpful to have a breakdown of exclusions by gender; MM agreed to include these figures in future.

Exclusion figures by gender to be in future reports

Dr Snowdon commented that the gender gap had narrowed, but that high performing girls appeared to have lost out, so extra vigilance was needed in relation to this. Mr Dolly explained that more able students were now a school development plan priority.

The destination data was discussed briefly. There had been issues with last Year's Y11, but support had been put place, including 1:1 support to make sure issues were addressed and that students had a good choice of options.

The number of students moving to employment had increased slightly and most students had moved on to meaningful occupations. All in all, the figures were very pleasing.

Trustees thanked the DHT for the information given.

24/67 STAFF WELLBEING – T Dolly - SDHT

School is taking a strategic approach to workload and is responding to the comments made by staff.

There had been feedback on Marking and the KS3 Assessment group. School is looking at a manageable approach to marking whilst still motivating the pupils.

Work is ongoing to reduce admin tasks, but the new school data card has created some additional work.

A virtual hub has been created so work can be accessed by students who are isolating. Work has also been undertaken with the families of children who have been hospitalised or with those with special circumstances; they can also have access to Google classroom.

Parents' Evening – whilst supporting the online system, Dr Snowdon commented that this was a missed opportunity for face-to-face meetings to establish relationships. There was a need to be mindful that other opportunities were available.

The Headteacher reported that the majority of parents preferred the new system but parents could request a face to face anytime. There are a number of other opportunities to meet, such as:

- Transition evening – Y6 to Y7 - at the beginning of the year
- Y10 – start of GCSEs - evening and also for the start of the Sixth Form
- There are also opportunities on Open Evenings

A parental survey will be sent out to ask for their preferences.

Parental survey re virtual meetings

School needs to remain mindful of the times and frequency of meetings, and continues to make time for faculties to introduce work around wellbeing, especially at the times of the year when wellbeing is particularly impacted.

The Staff Wellbeing Hub continues to meet and there has been a request for INSET time to be given to 'Menopause First Aid.'

24/68 SAFEGUARDING UPDATE- JMU

Data on the number of pupils involved in referrals has now been added to the report.

There has been a big jump in the number of pupils with supplementary High Needs funding from 10 to 20 and a slight decrease in referrals for Mental Health and Emotional Needs.

There had been an increase in issues affecting pupils in Y11 so reduced timetables have been offered for those finding it difficult to manage a whole day. They could continue to work using Google classroom at home and be supervised by parents.

There has been an increase in Fixed Term Exclusions (FTE), with 34 overall between November 2023 to February 2024. Y7 had the greatest number of suspensions, mostly down to 3 individuals. There has been 1 managed move, 1 was managed at home, and there had been a number of pupils referred to a Trustee panel. There is a core group in Y7 and Y8 causing difficulties.

The Headteacher thanked Trustees for their help with panels.

There had only been 1 permanent exclusion this year, but some children are very challenging. Parents had also reported difficulties in dealing with the attitudes of some of these pupils. This trend in the poor attitude and behaviour in younger children is a reported cause for concern.

It was agreed that use of smartphones is causing some issues, especially with the availability of access to social media and the internet.

24/69 LINK REPORTS

One report had been submitted – Wellbeing – Harriet Michael-Phillips and was on GovernorHub.

The Headteacher told trustees not be too concerned about completing them a Link report this academic year. It will be far more important to complete reports, from every area, next year on the lead up to the next OFSTED inspection.

Dr Snowdon commented that it was good to see that Business and Computing was doing well and that the new Head of Computing had settled in - he had had no concerns on his visit.

24/70 POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

- **SEND** – February 2024 – trustees **ACCEPTED** this Policy
There was some clarification given over the access arrangements on P 6.

It was noted that some parents were becoming increasingly concerned about their children having extra time in exams. There had been an increased number of requests recently. Evidence of medical needs is being requested in order to meet the exam boards regulations.

Dr Snowdon still had some concerns but agreed to speak to the SENCO.

- **ECT Induction Policy** - no substantial changes - Trustees **ACCEPTED** this Policy.

The following policies are the responsibility of the Headteacher and were included on the Agenda for information:

- Provider Access Policy
- Children with Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School Policy

24/71 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Details could be found on Governorhub. Trustees were encouraged to attend any events.

There had been two lovely evenings at the Atkinson Centre for the Spring Spectacular

Choir tour to Germany and Holland trip – July

Summer concert in school – end of term

Last Day - pm - social lunch to celebrate leavers etc. - Trustees are most welcome to attend

24/74 DATE AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Audit & Risk Committee – 23 April 2024 via zoom

Extra-ordinary full trustee meeting – 29 April 2024 – at school – time to be confirmed

Full Trustees meeting -16 May 2024 – 3.30 – zoom

Signed Chair Karen Owens

Date 16 May 2024