

# Uttoxeter Learning Trust (ULT)

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Education Committee held in a virtual setting on Tuesday 1 February, 2022 at 5.30 p.m.

**Present:** Rev. Sherwin (Chair), Mrs. Clark (CEO), Ms. Livesey, Mr. Slater

**In attendance:** Mr. Davies (Clerk to the Trust Board)  
Mr. Gliddon (Headteacher – Oldfields Hall Middle School)

### 1 Welcome:

Trustees were welcomed to today's meeting by the Chair. All of the documentation required for today's meeting forum had been circulated by email along with a clear and purposeful agenda. The meeting began with a presentation from the Headteacher of Oldfields Hall Middle School who focused on the strategic approach that is being implemented by the School's leadership team to recover from the adverse impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. There was a good level of engagement throughout the meeting with Trustees putting forward some excellent challenge points as well as having a number of matters clarified in relation to the circulated documentation.

The meeting was quorate.

### 2 Apologies:

**Resolved:** That apologies for absence be received and accepted from Mr. Sutcliffe and Mr. Oldham.

### 3 Confidentiality:

Trustees were reminded that all discussions that take place at this meeting should remain confidential to the meeting.

### 4 Presentation – Oldfields Hall Middle School:

Mr. Gliddon thanked Trustees for giving him the opportunity to talk about some of the challenges his team faced during the pandemic, the strategic plan that the School has put in place to mitigate some of the adverse impacts from Covid-19 and most importantly of all the green shoots of recovery that are being seen in the pastoral and academic development of Oldfields pupils. Summarising Mr. Gliddon's presentation, the following key points were noted:

#### 1.1

The strategic approach around recovery that has been deployed at the Middle School has been driven by a number of reference points. The clear educational research that has been coming out of the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) has enabled the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to think carefully about the adverse impact of Covid-19 on the attainment gap and what the best strategy is for accelerating progress and closing the learning gap between the disadvantaged cohort and its peers. Beyond this research-based approach, the School has also used various government publications and its own internal data sets to understand where pupils are at on their educational flightpaths, where the pockets of any underperformance may exist and ultimately how the planning around curriculum delivery needs to evolve so knowledge and understanding is reinforced and pupils have the

opportunity to revisit particular themes that they briefly experienced or missed entirely over the course of the last 12-18 months.

Trustees were reassured that the School's School Improvement Plan (SIP) is very much aligned with the recovery agenda. Whilst the emphasis may be different across the various subject areas, a golden thread is still ensuring that the adverse impact of the pandemic is being mitigated at every possible opportunity in terms of how the academic and pastoral development of each child is being supported.

### **1.2**

Mr. Gliddon explained that the impact of the pandemic has been very variable with a number of contextual factors coming to the fore including the quality of the home learning support that pupils received during the various lockdowns, the various parental challenges of delivering some of the core curriculum areas in a non-classroom based environment and the benefits that children of keyworkers received when accessing education in school on a daily basis. All of these factors have meant that the SLT has had to adopt a flexible approach which is targeted at the needs of individual pupils – i.e. some pupils need support to get back on their educational flightpath whilst other pupils need to be appropriately stretched as they are capable of functioning at Greater Depth. Trustees welcomed the fact that the SLT has a recovery plan that is not too rigid and can flex to accommodate an ever changing level of need.

### **1.3**

As part of the EEF research, Mr. Gliddon explained that although there is the opportunity for interventions to be deployed outside of the main classroom environment, the initial focus is very much on delivering interventions in class at an individual or small group level alongside high-quality teaching. Staff have seen the impact of delivering interventions in this way with pupils remaining with their peers and benefiting from the additional support that is provided at the point they need a particular aspect of learning to be reinforced or an extra push to make that next step in their learning journey.

There are more formal supportive mechanisms that have been deployed alongside this approach. Mr. Gliddon highlighted the benefits of the National Tutoring Programme, broader Teaching Assistant (TA) interventions and the use of summer schools which will all be deployed this academic cycle as part of the joined up, strategic approach. Some of these additional support mechanisms are funded by central government and it will be important that the SLT can demonstrate the impact of this public spend on the progress that is being made by Oldfields pupils.

### **1.4**

Mr. Gliddon provided some additional narrative around the More Able cohort which included the stretch and challenge activities that are being deployed. For some pupils who have been held back by the pandemic, the levels of frustration can quickly grow if these children do not feel that they are progressing at a significant pace with their education which is being tackled by the SLT. Initiatives such as the use of a Super Challenge in Geography and History; the English Easter Challenge; the English Year Writing Event and the UK Team Maths Challenge for Year 6 and Year 8 pupils were just some of the examples shared at this point in the meeting that are being deployed to secure motivation and buy-in across the More Able cohort.

### **1.5**

The vulnerable cohort is clearly an area that is receiving a specific focus from the SLT, particularly as research suggests this sub-set of the School population is likely to be the most adversely impacted by the pandemic. A tracking grid was shared with Trustees that demonstrated the range of interventions that each of these pupils is receiving at the Middle School. Reviewed on a regular basis, the tracking grid ensures that the mix of interventions

around an individual child continues to be fit for purpose with certain interventions removed if they are not delivering a sustained impact.

## 1.6

Trustees thanked Mr. Gliddon for his insightful and informative presentation.

**Trustee Challenge:** There were some questions around how the SLT was going to measure the impact of the National Tutoring Programme and also some observations were made in relation to the trends that seem to be emerging in the School's internal data set.

Mr. Gliddon took the Trustees comments on board for future reference and consideration.

At this point Mr. Gliddon gave his leave of absence from the meeting.

## 5 Declarations of Interest:

No declarations of interest were made by Trustees in respect of any items appearing on today's agenda.

## 6 Minutes of the Previous Meeting:

**Resolved:** That the Minutes of the Education Committee held on Tuesday 23 November, 2021 be approved as an accurate and true record.

**Resolved:** That the Minutes, Agenda and all reports and other papers considered at the meeting be made available for inspection if required.

The Clerk will sign and date the ratified minutes on behalf of the Chair. This task is important to ensure the PA to the CEO can ensure there is an electronic copy of historical minutes, retained for future reference and audit purposes.

## 7 Matters Arising:

The CEO was invited to provide a brief verbal update of any matters arising from the November minute record. The following summary points can be noted:

### 1.1

Trustees were thanked for their support with the recent recruitment and selection activities at Ryecroft CE (E) Middle School. Unfortunately, the School could not make a formal appointment to the Headteacher post and the position has been re-advertised. There was also some discussion around how the business continuity needs of the School will be met with the Deputy Headteacher set to leave the School at February half-term.

### 1.2

There was a discussion around which school might deliver the next presentation to the Education Committee. Trustees were keen to invite the latest school to join the Trust (Richard Clarke First School) to a future meeting with a specific focus requested around performance data.

**Resolved;** That the CEO invite the Headteacher/Chair at Richard Clarke First School to a future meeting.

### 1.3

Trustees were informed that the ULT has been approved by the DfE to engage in some collaborative based support with Talbot First School. Dialogue is still very at an early stage with Ms. Livesey sharing some personal reflections on the contextual characteristics of this

local school. As the engagement with this school evolves, Trustees will be kept abreast of the latest developments.

#### **1.4**

The CEO confirmed the latest position around organising a CPD session on the completion of risk registers. Some good practice has been identified in this area at Picknalls First School and the CEO intends to follow up on the possibility of facilitating some training in this area.

**Resolved:** That the CEO progress this matter.

### **8 Risk Register:**

The Risk Register for the ULT had been shared with Trustees in advance of today's meeting. The CEO was asked to pull out any key discussion points from this strategic document.

#### **1.1 – Row 1 – MAT Development**

The CEO confirmed that with the drive to expand the ULT, an opportunity has recently presented itself to deliver a promotional pitch to a number of schools in Stone. The schools include First, Middle and High schools with some C of E affiliation in places. This is an exciting opportunity for the ULT and the CEO informed Trustees who will be the key stakeholders involved with the forthcoming presentation which will include Mrs. Hanson whose school (The Richard Clarke First School) has only recently converted. Trustees wished the CEO and her team every success with this forthcoming promotional venture and look forward to hearing about the outcome of the engagement session in due course.

#### **1.2 – Row 6 – Statutory Requirements**

The risks that are associated with a small central team and whether this could be expanded will be a topic of discussion at the forthcoming Finance and Audit Committee. For now, the CEO shared with Trustees some of the key actions that have been taken in lieu of the recently experienced cyber-security incident. It was reported that the CEO and CFO are working with the Local Authority (LA) to provide greater reassurances in relation to GDPR and Health and Safety and a report is also due from the company who was directly involved with responding on the School's behalf to the cyber-security threat. The threats around cyber-security are becoming a real issue for schools and whilst the ULT has learnt some key lessons from the recent attack, all options need to remain on the table when securing future protection in this area.

Trustees thanked the CEO for this update, feeling that a significant amount of due diligence is applied to this strategic document.

### **9 Safeguarding:**

The latest Safeguarding overview was shared. The CEO confirmed that there have been some significant challenges with the latest variant of concern (Omicron) that has not only tested the resilience of staff of the local schools but has also put business continuity at risk in a number of places. The Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Overviews outline where the most significant disruption has occurred. Fortunately, as a result of school communities pulling together and leadership teams being creative in the deployment of resources, only one school within the ULT has had to close year groups. Trustees wanted to pass on their thanks to staff for keeping the show on the road in such testing circumstances.

From a Safeguarding perspective, having pupils off school self-isolating and high persistent absence rates remain a cause for concern. It was reported that the SLTs of schools continue to do what they can to work with local families to overcome barriers and to impress on them the need for children to be in school learning having lost so much education through the pandemic.

Trustees also noted one specific Safeguarding case and praised the courage and work of the relevant SLT in this matter.

## **10 Trust Performance – Autumn Term 2021:**

The CEO was asked to comment on any key headlines linked to the position of the ULT in Autumn, 2021. The following points were noted:

### **1.1**

There was a general discussion around the rollout of the KPI Overviews which Headteachers have been asked to complete on a termly basis. Whilst there have been some philosophical points shared about the purpose of the documents and the nature of the indicators, the reality is that if completed consistently and accurately, Trustees will be able to make some meaningful comparisons between ULT schools. This analysis is important to secure accountability and to investigate possible capacity and resource considerations that may be impacting on individual schools.

Trustees felt that the dialogue in relation to the KPI Overview should be dual purposed with challenge coming from LGBs as much as from Trustees themselves. The KPI Overviews once embedded should become a reference point for Link Governor activities and should dictate some of the governance challenge that plays out at a local level.

**Trustee Challenge:** Trustees queried some of the data in the KPI Overviews (i.e. the pupil mobility figure at Thomas Alleyne's). There was also some consideration given as to how the Trustees would develop a system to probe some of the key lines of enquiry in these documents and the use of the School Representation Board (SRB) to discuss common points of interest as they occur. It was also appreciated that these documents are very much in their infancy and need some time to bed in with Link Trustees also feeling the documents would be extremely useful to inform their on-going discussions with Headteachers and Chairs.

The key point for the KPI Overviews to be of use is that the information going into them is both accurate and consistent. This is an area for development involving the CEO and Headteachers which will be explored in the coming months.

### **1.2**

The CEO did identify the attendance data as being particularly challenging in the context of the pandemic and winter flu season. This issue is not just relevant to the ULT and has impacted nationally to varying degrees. These minutes already reference what actions schools are taking in this area.

### **1.3**

The CEO acknowledged that when it comes to SEF judgements, some schools seem more confident than others in this area. With any set of evaluative judgements like this, the evidence base behind the judgements is crucial with some probing of the evidence probably needed in the coming months, whether that be secured through some kind of peer to peer review or another form of external validation. There was also a reference point to the cycle of Ofsted inspections and when schools are facing their next formal inspection. The CEO confirmed she is having the necessary Ofsted Readiness discussions with leadership teams where an inspection is imminent.

### **1.4**

The latest sets of performance data for the ULT schools were shared with Trustees.

**Trustee Challenge:** As well as sharing some common and consistent approaches that are being deployed in relation to curriculum and assessment methodology across the Trust schools, Trustees did pursue a number of lines of enquiry in relation to the shared data sets.

Much of the commentary was at an individual school level and it was felt by inviting schools to present/share their data at future meetings, these identified lines of enquiry can be probed/explored in more detail. This way schools will have their opportunity to add any relevant contextual points around the shared raw data.

It was also acknowledged that Governors at a local level need the correct training to be able to probe shared data in a meaningful way. This is an area that the ULT may want to explore further in terms of a future training input for LGBs so a level of due diligence around data can also be applied at a local level.

**Resolved:** That Trustees pick up any data specific issues with the CEO if they need a key line of enquiry to be reported back to an individual school.

**Resolved:** That the CEO be thanked for her update.

#### **11 Ofsted Inspections:**

An overview of the recent Ofsted inspection at Hutchinson CE First School was shared. This included confirmation of the proposed rating, any limiting factors and some key contextual feedback that had been received during the visit. As soon as the Report comes through, it will be shared with Trustees.

**Resolved:** That the CEO circulate this report once available.

There was some clarification at this point about the current status of the SIAMS inspection cycle and when inspections in this area are likely to resume. Trustees noted this information.

#### **12 Policy Reviews:**

A series of ULT policies were presented to Trustees at today's meeting. They included:

- Exclusions
- Grievance
- School Improvement.

Other than a few notable tweaks suggested by Trustees, it was accepted that once the amendments are made, the policies can go forward to the Trust Board for formal ratification.

**Resolved:** That the CEO take account of this action.

#### **13 Any Other Business:**

There was only one item of additional business at this point in the meeting.

Rev. Sherwin confirmed she would, along with Mr. Slater, support the forthcoming recruitment and selection activities at Ryecroft CE (E) Middle School. Rev. Sherwin was thanked for offering to support the Trust in this way.

#### **14 Confidentiality:**

Trustees were asked to identify if there were any items/materials which needed to be excluded from any Agenda, Minutes, reports or other papers discussed at the meeting which would normally be made available for inspection following the meeting.

Trustees were also asked to identify any items included on the Agenda which require recording in a Confidential Appendix to the Minutes.

**Resolved:** That it be identified that no item needed to be recorded in a Confidential Appendix to the Minutes.

There were no items/materials identified for exclusion.

**15 Dates and Times of Future Meetings:**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Monday 14 March, 2022 at 5.30 p.m. It will be confirmed nearer the time whether this meeting forum will take place in a virtual or face to face setting.

All that was left to do was for the Chair to thank all Trustees for their attendance and contributions to today's meeting,

The meeting was brought to a close.

Rev. Sherwin (PP P. Davies – Clerk)

14.03.22

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**Chair**

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**Date**

## Uttoxeter Learning Trust (ULT)

Minutes of the Meeting of the Education Committee held in a virtual setting  
on Tuesday 1 February, 2022 at 5.30 p.m.

### Action Matrix

Minute	Owner	Action Required	Action Update
6	Clerk	Make November minutes available for inspection.	
6	Clerk	Sign and date ratified minutes on behalf of Chair.	
7	CEO	Invite Headteacher/Chair (Richard Clarke First School) to future meeting.	
7	CEO	Consider options for risk register training, noting some schools more developed e.g. TAHS and Picknalls	
10	Trustee	Pick up any specific data points with CEO direct.	
11	CEO	Share Ofsted Report once available.	
12	CEO	Forward agreed policies to Trust Board for formal ratification.	

**Date of next meeting:** Wednesday 14 March, 2022 at 5.30 p.m.

Absent Trustees to be informed.