

Uttoxeter Learning Trust (ULT)

Minutes of the Meeting of the Education Committee held in Thomas Alleyne's High School on Tuesday 28 June, 2022 at 11.10 a.m.

Present: Rev. Sherwin (Chair), Dr. Clark (CEO), Mr. Slater, Ms. Livesey, Mr. Haswell

In attendance: Mr. Davies (Clerk to the Trust Board)

1 **Welcome:**

Trustees were welcomed to today's meeting by the Chair which had been switched from 14.06.22 to accommodate everybody's availability. The main strategic focus of the meeting revolved around quality of education; trust priorities and the approval of policies with Trustees having ample opportunity to raise challenge questions and seek points of clarification as appropriate. Documentation had been shared in advance of the meeting along with a clear and purposeful agenda.

The meeting was quorate.

2 **Apologies:**

There were no apologies on this occasion. Everybody who was expected was in attendance (either in person or remotely) at today's meeting.

3 **Confidentiality:**

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

4 **Declarations of Interest:**

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

5 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting:**

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Education Committee held on Wednesday 27 April, 2022 be approved as a true and accurate 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.

6 **Matters Arising:**

There were no matters arising from the April minutes. The listed actions have either been progressed or will be directly referenced during the course of today's meeting.

7 Risk Register:

The latest version of the Risk Register had been shared with Trustees. The CEO confirmed this document will need to be updated further to reflect the current long-term absence of the IT Network Manager across the Trust and the current levels of mitigation that have been put in place. Fortunately, the recent SLA that has secured MSP support for First/Middle Schools and 3rd tier support for Thomas Alleyne's High School will ensure any significant gaps in service can be addressed, at least in the short to mid-term.

Trustees had no specific questions in relation to the circulated document other than to note the levels of due diligence that are applied by the CEO in this area.

8 Safeguarding:

Safeguarding is always an area that the Trust takes extremely seriously with individual schools held to account for their on-going compliance in relation to Safeguarding practice and procedure.

The CEO confirmed how a vulnerable group of Ukrainian pupils is currently being supported within the ULT family of schools, following the decision of families to flee conflict in their native homeland. Leaders across the ULT are ensuring that funds are being used to support these children now rather than wait for any financial support to filter down from central government and it is clear that the families in question are very thankful of the support that has been provided to date. The CEO added that one of the ULT schools has had to log a 'Child Missing in Education' following a family returning to Ukraine and another ULT school has also made a move to recruit a Ukrainian national to make use of their skills (for example, translation) when it comes to supporting this vulnerable cohort. Trustees were reassured that the SLT at the referenced ULT school is working with HR/the Local Authority (LA) to ensure the appropriate employment checks are carried out and the necessary risk assessments are in place as part of a robust approach.

In terms of other updates, the CEO reported that all ULT schools are currently completing the S157 Safeguarding Audit online tool which generates an action plan in line with LA deadlines. This audit will provide evidence about the progress schools are making in response to their core Safeguarding accountabilities and quality assurance processes. In addition, the CEO reported that an external review of Safeguarding will be carried out at Ryecroft CE Middle School following a parental complaint to the ESFA. The CEO will provide Trustees with key headlines from these audits and external review once they have taken place.

9 Quality of Education:

Ofsted Inspections

The CEO confirmed that an Ofsted inspection had taken place at Oldfields Middle School on 4 and 5 May with the concluding judgement being that the School continues to be a Good school. The School Report relating to the visit had been shared with Trustees in advance of today's meeting so they could see the positive feedback for themselves. Trustees wanted to put on record their thanks to the Headteacher and his staff for securing such a positive outcome for the School. Everyone should be really proud of what has been achieved with only one area for development referenced in the Report.

In other Ofsted related updates, the CEO confirmed that All Saints CE School received a Section 5 inspection on 7 and 8 June with the judgement coming through that the School continues to be a Good school. It was also reported that Hutchinson CE First School continues to be judged Outstanding with a Section 5 inspection expected next year and, finally, that Bramshall Meadows First School received a successful Ofsted pre-registration

audit on 25 May which confirmed the School has met the Independent School Standards and can therefore open. Trustees welcomed these updates.

Subject Leadership

The CEO outlined the steps that have been taken to support schools with Ofsted Readiness-related activities and, in particular, preparing Middle Leaders for deep dives that could take place within their respective curriculum areas. It is acknowledged that in smaller schools, subject leadership is more of a challenge given staff have responsibility for multiple subjects across the curriculum.

With a number of ULT schools facing imminent inspections, the CEO confirmed that an ex-HMI had been asked to facilitate an urgent twilight sessions for staff. This twilight session has now run with the feedback received from individuals extremely positive in nature – both in terms of the content of the training session but also the fact that staff now have access to a range of resources post event. Beyond this twilight session, the CEO outlined how the training provision will evolve with two further Trust-wide training days planned for 18 and 21 October as well as other sessions being arranged for Middle Leaders to network and share best practice.

Discussion then switched to the plans that are being put in place for a Trust-wide Light-up Uttoxeter training day which is scheduled for 04.01.23. The CEO confirmed that she has been discussing this event with Headteachers to ensure a quality product can be delivered – both in terms of any keynote speakers that might be invited and the range of activities that will be available throughout the day to support the Trust's future momentum.

Trustee Challenge: There was some discussion around how the event will be financed, when the agenda will be finalised for the event and whether other schools beyond the ULT would be allowed to attend. It was felt on this final point that with the exception of potentially inviting the Stone contingent of schools (who are seriously considering ULT membership) the event will remain Trust only schools at this stage.

Spring Term Data 2022 and Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Sheets

The CEO had shared both forecast KS1, KS2 and high school data sets with Trustees along with the termly KPI sheets.

The CEO is conscious that the primary focus of challenge around data and KPIs should be at a local governance level with individual Governing Boards holding Senior Leaders to account against key aspects of their own data sets. Trustees for their part should be more focused on looking for patterns and trends across a number of schools where possible and in particular any anomalies/shortfalls that stand out that require further scrutiny/understanding. As a Trustee indicated, this might mean inviting leaders from a particular school to talk about an aspect of their data and what actions they are going to take to bring about an improved position.

The CEO added that she is conscious of not overwhelming Trustees with reams and reams of data with an appropriate balance clearly needing to be struck. She did request that Trustees can always email through any questions in relation to shared data sets in advance of meetings. This action would allow the CEO to follow up on any key lines of enquiry, potentially engaging with Headteachers and other staff across the ULT schools to be able to share a full and complete response in relation to any questions raised.

Resolved: That Trustees give this matter some thought when receiving data in advance of future meetings.

Trustee Challenge: There was also a discussion around the timetable for sharing the Spring Term data to ensure that any actions that are determined from analysing the data sets can be implemented and have a chance of delivering impact before the Summer assessments are taken. This process also aligns with inviting schools to this committee forum so leaders can be asked what strategies they will deploy to bring about an upturn in academic performance for what remains of any given academic cycle.

Resolved: That the CEO give this matter some thought outside of today's meeting, liaising further with Trustees if needed.

For now, the CEO picked out one or two headlines from the shared data sets for further comment. She reassured Governors that any areas of underperformance in the data will always be on the radar for senior leaders as they use staff meetings and pupil progress meetings to hold staff to account for the academic progress that is being made by the cohort they are responsible for. These discussions will include what interventions are being deployed and how impactful they are proving to be.

To bring this matter to a close, Trustees felt it will be interesting to see how schools move from this point in the academic year to the results that are eventually achieved in the Summer. Trustees will return to the data set in the Autumn Term (when the validated national data is available) to satisfy themselves that where there are concerns with aspects of the performance data that the necessary mitigation has been put in place. The CEO also requested that she needed to secure some additional support to prepare the raw data for sharing with Trustees at future meetings. Members were more than happy to put this request to the Trust Board for formal ratification.

Resolved: That the CEO ensure this matter is raised again at Trust Board level.

As a new Trustee, Mr. Haswell acknowledged that he would welcome any supporting narrative around academic data so he could more easily understand what the data means/is telling Trustees. He suggested when it comes to the academic data, an Executive Summary or equivalent could be created for this purpose – if only to highlight the key lines of enquiry that a Trustee should be picking out in relation to any shared data set.

Resolved: That the CEO given this matter some thought, particularly how data can be made more accessible for Trustees who do not work in the educational sector.

Finally, the attendance figures were referenced in the KPI sheets. There is no doubt that maintaining a healthy attendance record and issues around persistent absenteeism have been challenging for schools throughout the pandemic period. Even now, it was reported that schools are working hard with families where there are known issues around attendance to bring about a positive change. One positive development is that to date Headteachers have not been seeing an increase in term time holiday requests as families look to take holidays that have been cancelled on two/three previous occasions. From a ULT perspective, there are targets set for schools around attendance and it is clear from September that there will be a further tightening of rules as schools aim to return attendance to pre-pandemic levels. Trustees welcomed this update, feeling that children simply need to be in school learning after having so much of their education impacted by the pandemic.

10 Trust Priorities:

Trustees are aware of the recently published White Paper that sets out an educational vision in the mid to long-term. With this in mind, the CEO is committed to working with staff and schools to strengthening the ULT in all aspects including developing and embedding a high quality and inclusive education and ensuring there is a continuous cycle of school improvement across the Trust.

At a local level, the CEO confirmed that her meetings with Headteachers need to secure the necessary call to action in each of these areas. Strong peer to peer relationships; opportunities for reflection and sharing best practice; the use of strategic documents such as School Improvement Plans; training opportunities at a Trust-wide level; strong and effective local governance and the influx of new schools into the ULT with fresh ideas/alternative approaches will all secure this forward momentum.

Trustee Challenge: As a Trustee indicated, these initiatives will not be enough on their own. With the Trust looking to grow and expand, not only will Trustees be pushing for the creation of the ULT's own teaching college to harness and develop new talent but the Central Team will also need to expand to include a Director of School Improvement (or equivalent) that will be accountable for academic performance across the family of schools. Whilst the Budget cannot support such initiatives at present, the addition of a high school to the structure could become a game changer in terms of releasing the additional funding that could accelerate these two proposals for the benefit of the ULT as a whole.

For now, it was agreed that a proposal will be put to the Trust Board that based on the successful expansion of the ULT, Trustees would be looking to establish a teaching college and appoint a Direction of School Improvement to drive the ULT forward to even greater successes in the future.

Resolved: That these proposals be forwarded to the Trust Board for due consideration.

As a final point, the CEO confirmed that the Headteacher at Oldfields Hall Middle School has been writing a Trust response to the Government Green Paper around SEND reform that was released in March. Once this response is available, it will be shared with Trustees.

Resolved: That the CEO take account of this action.

11 Policies:

A number of policies were presented to Trustees for approval at today's meeting. These included:

- ULT Appraisal
- ULT Capability of Staff
- ULT Parent Code of Conduct.

Resolved: That the ULT Appraisal Policy and ULT Capability of Staff Policy be approved with immediate effect. These policies will now be forwarded to the Trust Board for formal ratification.

Trustee Challenge: The ULT Parent Code of Conduct was a new policy and Trustees made a number of suggestions as to how this Code of Conduct could be improved – both in terms of tone and format. Trustees asked that this document is brought back to this committee once the necessary tweaks to take account of Trustee feedback have been made.

Resolved: That the CEO take account of this action. If the CEO cannot wait for the Autumn Term to ratify this document, then the ratification process may need to take place via email if time pressures dictate.

12 Any Other Business:

There was no additional business on this occasion.

13 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.

14 Dates and Times of Future Meetings:

The meeting schedule for 2022-23 has already been determined.

The next meeting of the Education Committee will take place on Wednesday 21 September, 2022 at 5.30 p.m.

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.

PP. P. Davies

11.10.22

Chair

Date

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Action Matrix

Minute	Owner	Actions	Action Update
5	CEO	Make April minutes available as a public record if required.	
5	Clerk	Sign April minutes on behalf of Chair.	
9	Trustees	Send through any data related questions in advance of future meetings.	
9	CEO	Consider timing issue with data and put data support request to Trust Board.	
9	CEO	Consider summary sheet to sit alongside data sets, drawing out top level, salient points.	
10	CEO	Forward proposals as referenced to Trust Board for further consideration.	
10	CEO	Share response to Government Green Paper with Trustees once available.	
11	CEO	Forward approved policies to Trust Board.	
11	CEO	Respond to Trustee feedback around ULT Parent Code of Conduct.	

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 21 September, 2022 at 5.30 p.m.

Absent Trustees to be informed.