

**Uttoxeter Learning Trust
Education Committee**

Minutes of a meeting of the Education Committee held remotely (via Office 365 Teams) on Tuesday, 24 November 2020 at 5.30pm.

Present:

Rev M Sherwin (chair), Mr S Slater, Mr R Oldham, Mr T Sutcliffe.

Dr S Clark – Chief Executive Officer
Mr R Sheldon – Clerk to the ULT

Apologies:

Apologies for absence was received and accepted from Mrs P Livesey and Mr T Sutcliffe.

204. Teaching School –

Mrs Rudge, headteacher of Thomas Alleyne's High School, was present for this item to present a report outlining the progress being made by the Teaching School and its future plans.

With regard to current provision, Mrs Rudge outlined the three key areas of provision and the progress that had been made within each of them:

- i) School-led Initial Teacher Training – 19 trainees had started in September 2020 and two further schools had been identified to support trainee placements. The KPI for this provision was for 15 trainees to be recruited and Mrs Rudge was therefore pleased to confirm that it had been met. In addition, similar figures were forecast for the following year.
- ii) CPD – 25 newly qualified teachers are using the Teaching School as the appropriate body to support them. Mrs Rudge also outlined the full range of other courses available during the Autumn term – all being held on-line due to Covid-19. Bespoke training courses for governors and trustees were also available. Mrs Rudge was pleased to confirm that the KPI for this key area had also been met.
- iii) School to School Support – Mrs Rudge reported that, due to Covid-19, it was not currently possible to offer school to school support. As a result, the KPI had obviously not been met.

Mrs Rudge further reported that the role of the Teaching School was to come to an end at the end of the school year. This would have implications for school/ULT funding and also for some members of staff appointed to work with the Teaching School. Trustees were informed that Teaching Schools were to be replaced by Teaching School hubs which would each be responsible for supporting 200 schools. Thomas Alleyne's High School did not meet the criteria to become a Teaching School hub but Mrs Rudge reported that she was meeting with local schools (John Taylor High and Blackfriars Schools in particular) with a view to Thomas Alleyne's working with them as a support school. It was also hoped to continue much of the work currently being undertaken, including in particular initial teacher training, through continued partnership working with appropriate establishments.

It was resolved –

- i) That Mrs Rudge be thanked for attending the meeting and outlining the work being undertaken by the Teaching School and the future arrangements.
- ii) That trustees congratulate the Teaching School on its success and regret the decision that had been taken nationally to close Teaching Schools as currently established.

205. Declarations of Interest:

There were no declarations of interest relevant to the agenda items.

206. Minutes:

Minutes of the Education Committee meeting held on 22 September 2020 had been previously circulated.

It was resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting be received and approved.

207. Matters Arising:

a) Ryecroft Middle – School Development Plan (Minute 193 refers)

The CEO reported that the headteacher continued to work on the key priorities identified at the last meeting to help bring about improvement and progress was being made. The school development plan had been RAG rated and appropriate actions were being taken to support continued progress. The CEO further reported that she was pleased with the work being undertaken, particularly around quality assurance through increased lesson observations, book trawls etc.

It was resolved –

That trustees note the progress being made by the school to bring about improvement but would continue to monitor outcomes.

b) New School (Minute 196(a) refers)

The CEO reported that, as a result of the decision to defer the opening of the school, the opportunity was being taken to have a further look at some of the plans for the new school. As a result, a number of changes had been identified including the number of toilets and space for use by the community. The arrangements for appointing the contractor for building the new school were nearing completion and work was planned to start in June 2021.

Discussion followed and a question raised around the new school offering something inspirational to help attract pupils. An assurance was given around what the new school would be able to offer for its pupils but trustees also noted that the level of funding currently available for the build of new schools was not the same as it was several years ago.

It was resolved –

That the update on the new school be noted and that trustees look forward to work starting next year.

208. Covid-19 – School Updates:

The CEO reported that there had been a number of positive cases for both staff and pupils in some schools across the Trust. A key challenge as a result of this was the impact on staffing levels within schools and an assurance given that headteachers were doing everything possible to appoint temporary staff to cover absences. The headteachers continued to discuss alternative teaching and learning arrangements should it be necessary due to the level of staff absences. Mr Slater reported that, as chair of the trust board, a number of headteachers had contacted him to express concerns around their school's affordability of supply teachers. He had therefore assured them, that as previously agreed by trustees, reserve funds could be used if necessary for this purpose.

The CEO further reported that remote learning was developing and although different arrangements were in place across the schools, it was working well and parents appreciative of the arrangements that had been put in place by their child's school.

With regard to the financial implications for schools the CEO confirmed that this remained under consideration by the Finance and Audit committee. The DfE had provided catch-up funding for schools and headteachers were considering how best to use this in their schools and plans being developed for approval by the local governing boards. The CEO suggested that consideration be given to trustees working with their link school regarding those plans. Discussion followed and trustees recognised the accountability that they had for all schools in the Trust and the importance therefore of having an overview as to what was happening in their schools, including financially expenditure. Trustees also recognised the importance of consistent school support plans to be put in place for pupils to reduce the gap which had widened due to the impact of Covid-19.

With regard to school standards the CEO reported that this would remain under review by the Education committee and undertook to provide a report for the next meeting to show the continued progress being made by schools to ensure that the Trust was able to maintain its target of being within the top 20% in the country. There was some discussion around pupil exams in 2021 but it was agreed to wait until DfE guidance was given before discussing further.

Finally, the CEO reminded trustees of the impact that Covid-19 was having on headteacher workloads, including out of school hours, to ensure that schools remained open for pupils and with the minimum disruption as possible for their teaching and learning.

It was resolved –

- i) That the CEO be thanked for the update on the impact of Covid-19 across schools.
- ii) That the CEO be requested to circulate to trustees' copies of individual school plans for the use of catch-up funding to support pupils, as they become available, and that they be discussed in more detail at a future meeting of the Trust Board.
- iii) That trustees await the CEO report to show the continued progress being made by schools.
- iv) That trustees recognise the impact of Covid-19 on headteacher workloads and again place on record their thanks to them for all of the work they were doing in their schools.

209. Safeguarding:

The CEO was pleased to report that there were no safeguarding matters to bring to the attention of trustees.

210. Review of Redundancy Scheme:

A report had previously been circulated giving a summary of the review process to-date and the CEO went through the detail of it. This included clarification from the unions that, in their view, collective bargaining had been undertaken on behalf of their members. The CEO further reported that clarification was currently being sought from lawyers around some of the other issues and would be shared with trustees once received, to help them decide the next steps.

It was resolved –

That the summary of the redundancy review process be noted but the Education committee is of the view that this is a matter for the Trust Board as a whole to consider further.

211. IT Review and GDPR:

Mr Oldham referred to a recent meeting held with the CEO, Mr Sutcliffe and Mr Harper (trustees) to consider the scope of any future IT review. The meeting had been positive and had recognised an opportunity to discuss with schools an IT provision that they could have rather than just around what they needed. It could provide an opportunity for digital transformation of the Trust, with a vision as to what could be done in the future.

Mr Oldham further reported that the meeting had also considered the immediate needs of schools regarding IT support and provision, particularly with changes being made to the support staff team currently available. Further consideration would be given to looking at how staff could be best employed to support all schools. This could include developing an infrastructure provided by the Trust whereby schools would have the opportunity to bid for the level of support they may need.

The CEO further reported that discussions would continue to help develop appropriate IT business cases for consideration and approval by the Trust Board. A further meeting was to be held shortly with Mr Harper to help the CEO structure the business case. Trustees were also informed that a number of adverts had been placed to appoint some temporary IT support technicians to work with schools across the Trust.

Discussion followed and Mr Slater referred to the importance of remote learning programmes being developed to help schools reduce the gap. He also referred to the flight paths being used to track pupil progress across schools and suggested that consideration be given developing a pilot scheme for the Trust in looking at how this could be further developed through the use of technology.

With regard to GDPR the CEO gave a brief update on trustee responsibilities, including data protection. An assurance was given that schools had policies in place to ensure that necessary guidance was being followed but trustees were informed that this remained a priority area and would be considered further by the Finance and Audit committee.

It was resolved –

- i) That the update on the IT review be received, with thanks to the CEO, Mr Oldham and Mr Harper for the consideration being given to the business case.
- ii) That the committee welcomes the suggested use of technology to help monitor flight paths in tracking pupil progress and that the CEO be requested to consider this matter further.

212. Policy Review:

The following national/general policies had been previously made available to trustees and the CEO confirmed that it was necessary for them to be adapted on behalf of the ULT.

a) Children Missing in Education

A copy of the LA policy had been previously circulated, together with a policy for children missing education for health reasons. Discussion followed and trustees recognised the importance of schools in the ULT following local and national guidance around this matter. The CEO gave an assurance that all schools were doing everything necessary to support children missing education.

It was resolved –

That the CEO be requested to develop a ULT policy, centred around the LA policy for children missing education, and that it should include an appendix for children missing education for health reasons based on LA guidance.

b) Newly Qualified Teachers

A copy of the Newly Qualified Teachers policy, developed by Thomas Alleyne's High School, had been previously circulated. The CEO reported that it was necessary to develop a similar policy for all schools in the Trust.

It was resolved –

That the Newly Qualified Teachers policy be received and that approval be given to the CEO to adapt the policy, where necessary, for use by other schools in the Trust.

c) Exclusions

The CEO reported that all schools followed national guidance in the event of a decision to exclude a pupil. It was necessary, however, for the ULT to have its own policy regarding this matter. Discussion followed and the role of the ULT possibly acting as a review board for pupil exclusions required clarification

It was resolved –

- i) That the CEO be requested to develop a ULT policy for pupil exclusions, based around local and national guidance, and that the CEO also be requested to seek the views of the NGA regarding the Trust's role as a review board.
- ii) That the Trust's Exclusion policy, once developed, should also link to other appropriate policies including in particular Safeguarding and Health and Safety.

d) Equality Policy

The CEO reported that each school had its own Equality policy but it was also necessary for the ULT to have a similar policy. The CEO further reported that she was currently discussing this matter with headteachers. Discussion followed and trustees suggested that the CEO should contact the NGA to see if it had a model policy on which the ULT policy could be based.

It was resolved –

That trustees support the development of a ULT Equality policy and await a draft policy at a future meeting

e) Safer Recruitment

The CEO reminded trustees that the Safer Recruitment policy had been approved at a previous meeting. However, changes were necessary due to the implications of Brexit and these would be made in accordance with guidance recently received.

It was resolved –

That approval be given for the Safer Recruitment policy to be revised as necessary to comply with guidance received.

213. Risk Register:

A copy of the risk register had been previously made available to trustees. Discussion followed and trustees welcomed its revised format in helping make clear the level of identified risks and the actions being taken to remove or minimise the risks.

It was resolved –

That the updated risk register be received and noted.

214. Trustee Training Programme:

The CEO reminded trustees that a level 1 Safeguarding course had been arranged for 8 December. Discussion followed and trustees recognised the need to identify other appropriate training courses, including one around PREVENT. Mr Slater further reported that he was continuing his telephone conversations with chairs of local governing boards and included discussions around training needs. The chairs welcomed an opportunity for some joint training courses between trustees and governors.

It was resolved –

That the CEO be requested to identify appropriate training courses for trustees, including joint training with chairs, and to develop a training programme.

215. Other Business:

a) Richard Clarke First School

Mr Slater reported that he and the CEO had recently met with the headteacher and chair of governors and targets had been agreed through the headteacher appraisal process.

b) Review of Local Governing Boards

Mr Slater reported that the Trust Board had agreed to undertake a review of the local governing boards and referred to a report prepared by the clerk to the trust board regarding this matter. Mr Slater expressed his thanks to the clerk and stated that the report would be shared with trustees in due course to help support the review.

The chair also reported that she was developing a report to help encourage parents and other members of the community in becoming school governors. This would be shared with schools and trustees when ready.

c) Thanks to Schools

The chair reported that she was currently working with Windsor Park Middle School and referred to the tremendous work it was doing to support the local community at this difficult time. She was also aware of similar good work being done by most other schools and recognised the importance of celebrating this support to ensure that the community was aware of everything being done on its behalf.

It was resolved –

That trustees acknowledge the work being done by schools, with thanks to them, and that the CEO be requested to explore how best to celebrate the work of schools.

216. Date of Next Meeting:

As previously agreed, the next meeting of the Education Committee was to be held on Tuesday, 26 January 2021 at 5.30pm. The meeting would again be held through Microsoft Teams.

M. Sherwin

Signed.....

26 January 2021

Date.....