

**Uttoxeter Learning Trust
Education Committee**

Minutes of a meeting of the Education Committee held remotely (via Office 365 Teams), on Tuesday, 28 April 2020 at 4.30pm.

Present:

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

Dr S Clark – Chief Executive Officer

Mr R Sheldon – Clerk to the ULT

171. Declarations of Interest:

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

172. Minutes:

Minutes of the Education Committee meeting held on 28 January 2020 had been previously circulated.

It was resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting be received and approved.

173. Matters Arising:

a) Pre-Ofsted Review – Ryecroft Middle School (Minute 161(b) refers)

The CEO reminded trustees that the post-Ofsted review of Ryecroft Middle School had been discussed at the last meeting of the Trust Board. The report had highlighted some strengths of the school but also identified a number of areas requiring improvement. The CEO reported that the areas of concern had been discussed with the headteacher and a recent learning walk also undertaken. School improvement would be a priority and the CEO would base herself at the school for several days a week as soon as the situation allowed, to support the headteacher in implementing improvement strategies. Trustees also noted that a new chair of governors had recently been elected.

Discussion followed, including consideration of the review that had been written by Barbara O'Brien Education Ltd. Trustees questioned whether the document fully reflected the concerns and Mr Slater, chair of trust board, agreed to discuss this with the company before the next pre-Ofsted review was undertaken.

It was resolved –

- i) That the pre-Ofsted report for Ryecroft Middle School be received and kept under review.
- ii) That the CEO be requested to obtain a copy of the school's action plan to address the key issues and to help trustees monitor, and challenge as necessary, the impact of improvement strategies.

- b) Ofsted Inspection – Picknalls First School (Minute 161(b) refers)
Consideration had been given to the published Ofsted report for Picknalls First School at the last meeting of the trust board. Trustees had recognised the quality of the report.
- c) Home/School Communication Policy (Minute 167(b) refers)
A copy of the Home/School Communication policy had been previously circulated and the CEO reported that the policy had been well received by headteachers. Discussion followed and trustees requested the CEO to ensure that the policy also made clear to parents how they could address issues with headteachers regarding special needs or health and safety concerns they may have.

It was resolved –

That the Home/School Communication policy be received and accepted.

174. School Performance:

- a) KS4 and KS5 Data
Trustees had been previously circulated with KS4 and 5 data for Thomas Alleyne’s High School, together with details of linked intervention strategies to bring about improvement. The CEO reported that ongoing discussions continued with the headteacher to monitor and review the impact of those strategies. Mr Slater, chair of the trust board, also reported that he continued to support the headteacher with strategies to bring about improvement in post-16 outcomes.
- b) Awarding Qualifications – Summer 2020
Details of DfE guidance for the awarding of student qualifications for 2020 had been previously circulated and the CEO confirmed that the headteacher was working with staff to ensure that the appropriate student grades were communicated to the exam boards. Mr Slater reported that he was also discussing this matter with the headteacher and offering further advice as necessary. He confirmed that he was satisfied that a robust system had been put in place by the school to ensure the reliability of information given to the exam boards. All concerned had recognised the challenges around providing accurate data but a number of factors had been taken into account to ensure the consistency of information provided.

Discussion followed and trustees were also reminded of other challenges faced by the school, including student entry to the 6th form and the difficulties around individual interviews with students. Consideration also had to be given to the number of students expressing an interest in sitting the exams during the Autumn term and the arrangements for this. Trustees also recognised that a number of appeals could be received from students against the qualifications awarded to them and the need to make clear the role of the school and the trust board in considering any appeals. DfE guidance regarding this matter was expected and would be considered as appropriate.

It was resolved –

- i) That trustees would keep under review the KS4 and 5 data and the CEO requested to keep them updated on the impact of improvement strategies.
- ii) That trustees recognise the difficulties around interviewing students for entry to the 6th form but requested the CEO to discuss with the headteacher the possibility

of remote interviews being held with students through the use of Microsoft Teams.

- iii) That trustees place on record their thanks to the headteacher and staff at Thomas Alleyne's High School for all of the work they were doing to bring about improvement in KS4 and 5 data, whilst also ensuring that a robust system was in place to ensure that consistent data was provided to the exam boards for awarding student qualifications.

175. New School:

The CEO reported that the project board continued to meet and that a recent meeting had also been held with the DfE regarding the new school. The target remained for the new school to open in September 2021 although building work had still to start due to restrictions in place due to the coronavirus. The building restrictions would also likely impact on the completion of the housing developments. Consideration was therefore being given to alternative arrangements that could be put in place for pupil admissions should the school not be able to open in September 2021. One possible option could be for pupils to be temporarily based at Picknalls First School until they were able to move into the new school, although other possible options would also be considered. This could include deferring the opening until September 2022.

The CEO further reported that the local authority had agreed to initially release £11K of the funds available to support the opening of the school and that contact had been made with the lawyers around necessary amendments to the ULT Articles of Association. Discussions were still to take place with the governing body of Tynsel Parkes First School regarding the shared catchment area.

It was resolved –

That the update on the new school be noted and that trustees would keep progress under review.

176. Safeguarding:

The CEO reported that due to the coronavirus, a number of safeguarding policies were being updated or implemented. Copies had been previously circulated and the CEO went through the detail of them. The CEO further reported that headteachers continued to meet on a regular basis to address the challenges and to also consider how the schools could partially re-open in the near future as seemed likely. This was to be considered in more detail at the meeting of the headteacher professional board the following morning and for an action plan to be developed in readiness for this.

a) Safeguarding policy

The CEO reported that an updated Safeguarding policy had been received from the local authority and confirmed that all schools were taking necessary actions to comply with the guidance. Trustees noted that all schools remained open for vulnerable children, and children of key workers, with social distancing being maintained.

b) Bereavement policy

A draft Bereavement policy, developed by the local authority, had been previously circulated and the CEO went through the detail of it. Trustees recognised the importance of such a policy, particularly at this moment in time, and Rev Sherwin also

referred to the importance of ensuring that such a policy was of benefit for all staff and pupils, not just for any school related bereavement, but also across the wider community.

c) Internet Safety and On-line Learning policy

A draft On-line Learning policy had been previously circulated and the CEO reported that this policy was still being developed. Trustees views were welcomed. A guidance document had also been circulated to remind trustees of their responsibility to ensure that appropriate policies were in place to ensure on-line safety. Discussion followed and consideration also given to how new ways of working and on-line learning would likely be developed further. Trustees therefore recognised the importance of appropriate internet safety and on-line learning policies being in place.

It was resolved –

- i) That the Safeguarding policies referred to above be received and noted and developed further to ensure they complied with national guidance and appropriate for ULT schools.
- ii) That Rev Sherwin be requested to look in more detail at the Bereavement policy and to develop further in the best interests of all staff and pupils.
- iii) That the CEO be requested to seek advice from the HR provider with regard to safer recruitment guidance when conducting remote interviews.

177. Risk Register:

Trustees had been previously circulated with an updated risk register to reflect discussions from the last meeting of the Education committee. The CEO also reported that the register had been updated to include risks relating to the coronavirus and performance at Ryecroft Middle School.

Discussion followed and consideration given to the possible risks associated with ULT pupil numbers due to the changes at JCB Academy. The CEO reported that the final admission numbers had not yet been received from the local authority but would circulate them to trustees once available.

It was resolved –

- i) That the updated risk register be received and noted.
- ii) That the risk register be further updated to include a re-wording to the risk associated with the development of the ULT and that it be shown as a medium/high risk.

178. Other Business:

a) Annual Training Programme

Mr Slater reminded trustees of the need to have training programme in place for both trustees and local school governors and indicated that the Teaching School could have a role in this. Discussion took place and trustees acknowledged the importance of having a training programme in place but that this should be a matter for the trust board, rather than a committee, to consider.

It was resolved –

That a trustee/local school governor training programme be included on the agenda for the next meeting of the ULT trust board.

b) JCB Equipment

Mr Slater reported that Mr Harper, trustee, had donated JCB computer equipment but it was important to ensure that it was used for the benefit of all schools across the ULT. Mr Gliddon, headteacher at Oldfields Hall Middle School, had offered to assist with this.

It was resolved –

That Mr Slater be requested to discuss this matter further with Mr Harper to ensure best use of the equipment across schools in the ULT.

c) Performance Management

The CEO informed trustees of implications for performance management of staff as a result of the current restrictions for the opening of schools. It would be important to ensure that there was consistency of performance management procedures across all schools and to also consider the need for ULT related targets. The CEO confirmed that she would discuss the process with headteachers and would keep trustees updated.

It was resolved –

That the report be noted and that trustees recognise the importance of a consistent performance management process and the value of ULT related targets where appropriate.

d) Current School Openings

The CEO confirmed that all ULT schools currently remained partially open to support vulnerable children and children of key workers. On-line learning was in place for all other pupils. The CEO reported that arrangements differed, but were appropriate for each school setting. Importantly, the arrangements were also in place to ensure the health and well-being of all staff and pupils in school. Trustees noted that some staff were also in school during the Easter holidays to support any children in school.

The CEO further reported on the arrangements in place across the schools to ensure high quality distance learning. Discussion took place and trustees also recognised the need to ensure there was a focus on those pupils who may not be choosing to engage with distant learning programmes. The CEO agreed to discuss this matter with headteachers.

It was resolved –

- i) That trustees place on record their thanks and appreciation to all teachers and support staff for all of their hard work to support pupils whether in school or through distance learning.
- ii) That current school arrangements be kept under review, whilst mindful of national guidance.

e) Pupil Transition

Discussion took place regarding pupil transition given the current situation and the CEO reported that headteachers were currently giving thought to this. It was to be discussed in more detail at the next meeting of the headteacher professional board but an assurance was given that pupil transition arrangements between schools remained a key priority.

It was resolved –

That trustees welcome consideration being given to transition arrangements for all pupils, and particularly SEND pupils, at this difficult time.

179. Date of Next Meeting:

As previously agreed, the next meeting of the Education Committee was to be held on Tuesday, 23 June 2020 at 4.30pm. The venue for the meeting will be confirmed nearer the date, but if it was still necessary for the meeting to be held remotely then the committee will continue to meet through Microsoft teams.

Rev. M Sherwin

Signed.....

23 June 2020

Date.....