

**Uttoxeter Learning Trust
Trustees' Board**

Minutes of a meeting of the Trustees' Board held in Thomas Alleyne's High School on Wednesday, 12 February 2020 at 6.00pm.

Present:

Member and Trustee – Mr S Slater (in the chair)

Trustees – Mrs V Bennett, Mr S Harper, Mrs P Livesey, Rev M Sherwin, Mr T Sutcliffe.

Also Present:

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) – Dr S Clark

Clerk to the Uttoxeter Learning Trust (ULT) – Mr R Sheldon

Apology:

An apology for absence was received from Mr R Oldham.

Welcome:

The chair was pleased to welcome Mr S Harper to his first meeting of the trust board.

222. Declarations of Interest:

There were no declarations of interest from trustees relevant to agenda items.

223. Report on Chair's Actions:

The chair reported on the following actions taken between this and the last meeting:

- Approval had been given to the request from Dr Clark, CEO, to undertake a school improvement project as part of her NPQL. Dr Clark then gave a brief outline of the project to be undertaken, which would involve working with other headteachers, and would be of benefit to schools in the ULT.
- A presentation had been given from SERO Creative around plans for a long-term marketing strategy. Further details regarding these plans would be given at a future meeting.

It was resolved –

That trustees fully support all actions taken by the chair, with thanks to him.

224. Trustees' Board Minutes:

Minutes of meetings of the Trustees' Board held on Wednesday, 11 December 2019, Tuesday, 17 December 2019 and Wednesday, 22 January 2020 had been previously circulated.

It was resolved –

That the minutes of all meetings be received and approved, subject to the following amendments:

11 December 2019

- Minute 206(i) and 213(b) – Mrs S Clarke (CEO) to read Dr S Clark (CEO)

- Minute 206(vii) – Timetable for Policy Review. Resolution to be deleted and replaced with the following:
 - i) The CEO would forward a timetable of policy reviews to the school representation board (SRB) and that the trust board would welcome and consider representations from the SRB for proposed changes to existing policies.
 - ii) New policies would be drafted and forwarded to the SRB for comment prior to approval.

17 December 2019

Minute 217 – Sarah Clarke to read Sarah Clark and Mrs Clarke to read Dr Clark.

22 January 2020

- Present and Minute 219 – Mrs S Clarke (CEO) to read Dr S Clark (CEO).
- Minute 219 – third paragraph amended to read: The chair also confirmed that Mrs Bell had recently resigned as a trustee.

225. Matters Arising:

Minutes of 11 December 2019:

- a) Minutes of Meetings of Local Governing Boards (Minute 206(i) refers)
The clerk reported that folders had now been set up in Office 365 to store minutes of meetings of local governing boards and all other ULT documentation. Discussion followed and it was noted that not all trustees were currently able to access Office 365. The CEO undertook to pursue this matter with the IT technician.
- b) Growth of the ULT (Minute 206(iii) refers)
The chair reported that a meeting had been arranged to meet with the governing body of The Richard Clarke First School to discuss the school becoming a permanent member of the ULT, but had been postponed due to inclement weather. The meeting was, however, to be re-arranged. The chair further reported that this matter had also been discussed at the recent meeting of the Finance committee and consideration given to a number of questions raised by the governing body regarding membership. The chair confirmed that both he and the CEO would continue to work with the governing body to help facilitate the school's permanent membership of the ULT.
- c) ULT External review and Trustee Self-Evaluation (Minute 206(vi) refers)
A summary report to show individual trustee responses to the self-evaluation document had been previously circulated. The chair thanked everyone for their responses and recommended that the National Governor Association (NGA) be invited to undertake an external review, using the self-evaluation responses as the starting point. Further to the external review a training programme could also be developed with courses being facilitated through the Teaching School.

It was resolved –

- i) That the CEO be requested to arrange for the NGA to undertake a review of the ULT at the earliest opportunity.
- ii) That any thoughts trustees may have regarding appropriate training courses should be forwarded to the CEO.

d) Timetable for Policy Review (Minute 206(vii) refers)

As discussed earlier in the meeting, this matter had been fully considered at the meeting held on 16 October and the minutes of that meeting amended to better reflect the decision taken. Trustees were reminded that:

The CEO would forward a timetable of policy reviews to the school representation board (SRB) and that the trust board would welcome and consider representations from the SRB for proposed changes to existing policies. New policies would be drafted and forwarded to the SRB for comment prior to approval.

Minutes of 22 January 2020:

New School (Minute 221 refers)

The CEO was pleased to report that meetings were being held with the local authority as necessary and that everything remained on track for the school to open in September 2021. The CEO further reported, however, that at the most recent meeting the local authority had indicated that projected pupil numbers for September 2021 could be accommodated by existing schools and that trustees could consider delaying the opening of the new school until September 2022.

Discussion followed and trustees were informed that housing on the new estate would be occupied before September 2021 and that there would be a number of children seeking school places at that time. The chair also reminded trustees that the DfE had given confirmation of guaranteed funding for 15 pupils per year group for 3 years.

It was resolved –

That the updates on the new school be received and noted and that trustees agree that arrangements should continue to be made for the new school to open in September 2021.

226. Review of Communications Regarding Outcome of Consultation with Staff:

Trustees had met on 22 January 2020 to consider this matter further and minutes of that meeting had been previously circulated. The matter had also been discussed at the recent meeting of the Finance committee. The CEO reported that the letters to staff had been amended to reflect the discussions of both meetings. Copies of both amended letters, ready to be sent to all staff the next morning, had been previously circulated.

Discussion followed and trustees noted that the letters referred to a variation in contract although the changes were to terms and conditions of employment – not the contract.

It was resolved –

- i) That both letters be amended to make clear that the changes to be made were to terms and conditions of employment rather than to the contract of employment.
- ii) That the amended letters be sent to all staff before the end of the week.

227. Chief Executive Officer Report:

A copy of the CEO's report had been previously circulated, with a focus on the first five weeks in post. The CEO reported that priority during the first few weeks had been to visit

the schools and meet headteachers. Particular reference was made to the following matters:

a) Ofsted Inspections

Picknalls First School had recently been inspected and the CEO was pleased to confirm that the recently published report had judged the school to be good with outstanding practice in some areas. The chair was pleased to report further that the Ofsted inspector had also recognised the impact of the ULT through its support and challenge of the school.

b) Middle Schools

Priority had been given to working with middle schools in readiness for anticipated Ofsted inspections. This included arrangements for pre-Ofsted reviews as agreed by the trust board.

c) Governing Boards

The CEO was looking at ways to raise the profile of local governing boards, particularly with a view towards the recruitment of governors – and also trustees. This could be done through adverts in the local press and/or the publication of a regular newsletter to all ULT parents.

d) PR and Marketing Strategy

The CEO was working with headteachers on short-term strategies to maximise pupil recruitment from September 2020. They were also working with SERO Creative on long-term marketing/PR strategies and trustees would be kept informed of developments.

It was resolved –

- i) That the CEO be thanked for her informative report and that it be received and noted.
- ii) That trustees congratulate the headteacher, staff and governors at Picknalls First School for the very positive Ofsted report.
- iii) That trustees would welcome a regular newsletter to be written by the CEO for parents and other stakeholders to reflect the work and ongoing development of the ULT.

228. Safeguarding:

The chair reported that, at a recent meeting of the school representation board (SRB), discussion had taken place regarding lock down procedures operated across the schools. Ongoing consideration was being given to this to determine a common practice. Procedures would include different arrangements to reflect whether someone was inside, or outside, the school premises. 'Invacuation' was a terminology now being used by schools rather than 'lock down'.

It was resolved –

That trustees request to be kept updated on revised invacuation procedures to be adopted by schools.

229. Education Committee Report:

Trustees had been previously circulated with minutes of a meeting of the Education committee held on 26 November 2019. Trustees also noted that a meeting of the Education committee had recently been held on 28 January 2020. In the absence of the committee chair, Rev Sherwin (committee vice-chair) outlined the key issues considered at both meetings, much of which had already been discussed earlier in this meeting. There had been in-depth discussion around school data with reports made available for all schools.

The chair of the trust board further reported that a pre-Ofsted review had been undertaken at Ryecroft Middle School and that staff had found it be of use. Discussion followed and it was agreed that the next pre-Ofsted review should be undertaken at Oldfields Hall Middle School.

It was resolved –

- i) That the minutes of the Education committee meeting held on 26 November 2019 be received and accepted and that the report of the meeting held on 28 January 2020 be received and noted.
- ii) That as agreement had been reached for the next pre-Ofsted review to be undertaken at Oldfields Hall Middle School the CEO be requested to discuss with the headteacher the possibility of the previously agreed first external SEND review being undertaken at another ULT school rather than Oldfields Hall.

230. Finance Committee Report:

Trustees had been previously circulated with minutes of a meeting of the Finance committee held on 5 December 2019. Trustees also noted that a meeting of the Finance committee had recently been held on 5 February 2020. The committee chair outlined the key issues considered at both meetings, much of which had already been discussed earlier in the meeting, including in particular the changes to redundancy benefits:

- External Audit – this had been the key consideration for the meeting held in December and had been recommended for approval by the trust board, subject to identified changes.
- Central Funds/Top Slice – consideration was given to the current top slice of schools' budgets and the central services currently offered. The committee recognised that change was necessary, particularly to the centrally provided services. A further report was being prepared for consideration at the next meeting and any recommended changes would be submitted to the trust board for approval.
- Policies – a number of policies were being reviewed and would be submitted for approval at a future meeting of the trust board.

It was resolved –

That the minutes of the Finance committee meeting held on 5 December 2019 be received and accepted and that the report of the meeting held on 5 February 2020 be received and noted.

231. Policies:

a) New School Admissions Policies

Copies of the draft Admissions policies (main school and nursery) had been previously circulated and the CEO confirmed that both policies took into account the admission arrangements of other ULT schools and the DfE admissions template.

It was resolved –

- i) That the draft Admissions policies (main school and nursery) be received and approved, subject to an amendment to show that approval for admission arrangements be made by the trust board and not the governing body.
- ii) That the CEO be requested to forward both policies to the local authority to seek its views.

b) Code of Conduct

A copy of the updated Code of Conduct had been previously circulated and the CEO confirmed that the only recommended change was to show school improvement strategies agreed by local governing boards should be linked to the ULT School Improvement policy. Discussion followed and the chair requested that further changes be made to the Code of Conduct to include safeguarding, SEND and health and safety within the roles and responsibilities for the trust board and local governing boards.

It was resolved –

- i) That the revised Code of Conduct be received and approved, subject to the inclusion of safeguarding, SEND and health and safety responsibilities.
- ii) That consideration would also be given to linking the Code of Conduct in future to the ULT Visions and Values policy.

232. Other Business:

JCB Academy

Mr Harper informed trustees that through his employment at JCB he worked closely with the new chair of the JCB Academy trust board and was also aware that the academy was in the process of recruiting a new principal. He would therefore take the opportunity, wherever possible, to encourage greater partnership working between the ULT and JCB Academy. Discussion took place and the chair reminded trustees that he had met with the previous chair of JCB Academy trust board to promote and encourage greater partnership working. He confirmed that he would always be willing to meet with the new chair to continue such discussions.

233. Date of Next Meeting:

It was resolved –

That the next meeting of the Trustees' Board be held on Wednesday, 13 May 2020 at 6.00pm. (Venue to be determined).

Signed.....
S. Slater

1 April 2020
Date.....