

Directors Meeting (via Zoom) 01.04.2020
Minutes

Attendees Tony Bishop, Andrew Waterhouse, Bill Nelson, Christopher Donnellan, Rob Hill, Louisa Debertol, Anna Kilsby, Catherine Leong

Agenda item	Acrions
<p>1. Declaration of pecuniary interest/conflict of interest arising from agenda</p> <p>No declarations made.</p>	
<p>2. Minutes and Matters arising</p> <p>i. Minutes accepted as a fair record.</p> <p>ii. Covid 19 update TB reported he is in continuous contact with all heads. Update circulated in heads own words based on week 1 on closure.</p> <p>Schools and heads have risen to the challenge given the time available and scope of what was being asked. Priority has been making schools available to the vulnerable and making systems available for home use. Plans were in progress but this has accelerated these in relation to software and linking schools. Most of the schools have some sort of learning platforms, but these are different to suit schools and their needs. Some do not have a learning platform and we are in the process of looking what we can offer to those who don't but this is a few weeks away.</p> <p>We will be buying IXL – a web based teaching software to support Maths and English. Current situation has advanced these plans.</p> <p>CD noted the assumption is every family can access the internet for education rather than just general smartphone use. TB confirmed schools have tried to identify who could and could not and provide additional hardware before closure. It is a known issue and is being dealt with at school level. In these circumstances we are heavily reliant on IT. It will form part of discussions at heads meetings this week along with how we manage regular points of contact with all families.</p> <p>LD observed looking at the Italian experience secondary age are doing zoom classes following a timetable which works well on tablets and phones. TB confirmed it will be something we look at in a couple of weeks. A single Microsoft tenancy means we can use Teams for teaching.</p> <p>BN noted on seeing the report from schools and being aware of the stress they face it would be good if board wrote to them thanking them.</p> <p>Directors noted it would be good to encourage LACs to utilise Zoom/Teams etc to meet.</p>	<p>Message from directors to staff.</p>

<p>CD queried looking ahead to Easter, should we planning to combine open schools. TB confirmed this has been raised with heads for consideration and if we have children that need it we need to find a way. Most have the capacity to be open for the small number in question with additional considerations in terms of support for vulnerable children and staff they feel safe with.</p> <p>LD queried movement of staff being possible where staffing levels are running low. TB confirmed this has been discussed with heads keeping him informed of staffing levels and availability. We have not got to the point where we can't manage yet. CD queried if issue of pay had been raised if open over Easter. TB confirmed at this stage it would be time in lieu and rota'd off. Discussion also taking place to ensure staff are not taking a greater brunt than colleagues and a return to work/open process.</p> <p>LD observed if time extends as expected requirements will shift from consolidation of existing knowledge to acquisition of new, so are there plans for teachers to get training on online learning, digital strategy etc. TB confirmed this has been discussed in relation to the tools/platforms being put forward and SIP plans will evolve and align more with online learning. Directors noted teachers may need support with this and should be reflected in CPD, and teachers encouraged to record and reflect in CPD records.</p>	
<p>3. Safeguarding</p> <p>No items of note arising outside of above. All FSW and SENCOs have contacted and remained in contact with vulnerable children. Work is being carried out to ensure FSM is addressed and the national voucher scheme was rolled out yesterday.</p>	
<p>4. Finance report</p> <p>Finance report circulated in advance. Key points noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FSM interim measures now moving to government route. • ESFA directive on PPN to ensure support to suppliers. Team is in process of identifying. • SAGE systems are in use across central team. • Auditors have moved to working remotely to enable us to get year end figures. • Budgets are being worked on over Easter. Additional time needed to load all schools data into HCSS. Schools will have draft budgets after Easter. • Budgets need to be with DFE by mid July. <p>RH queried in the Trust budget the teaching school income appears to drop off after 2 years. TB confirmed a 40K grant is currently received and this will no longer be the case after September 2021 as the structure moves from a spread of smaller teaching schools to more centralised hubs. We are not in a position to apply to be a hub, nor do we think we want to be, but we will need to look at how teaching school work is funded. A small reserve will allow us to transition to a self-sufficient model.</p>	

<p>BN queried if we have any commercial sponsorships that help fund education in the Diocese. SR confirmed we do not, but it is something we should look at in the longer term.</p> <p>CD asked what areas should be highlighted for director awareness. SR flagged primary area to be aware of at this stage is PPN, but this should have no budgetary impact. RH noted it is the equivalent of furloughing them through our system as we have the funds.</p> <p>Capital expenditure approval requested for phone system and toilets at Thomas Beckett and is budgeted for in devolved capital. BN questioned given economic uncertainty if we have safeguards in place to ensure we don't release money and they then fold. SR confirmed money is released on certified work completed and invoice.</p> <p>Directors raised question of whether work on phone systems would be deemed essential for travel purposes. SR will confirm with NY.</p> <p>Directors approved spend.</p>	<p>SR to confirm</p>
<p>5. Strategic Partnership</p> <p>TB outlined that the Strategic Partnership groups act as a non-governance level between LACs and directors. LC produced the format used for the initial meeting in Corby and Kettering. Focus is creating a format linking levels for school improvement.</p> <p>TB outlined conversations in place with Bedford and Northampton governors to do something combined.</p> <p>CD questioned how this links with RSCs interest. LC noted this hasn't happened yet due to shutdown, but their interest is going to be getting schools out of categories and all things point to this – finance, leadership, governance.</p>	
<p>6. School Improvement</p> <p>Directors noted the baseline data report as giving a comprehensive picture of the Trust's starting point. LC reported this gives a reference point over the coming years as to what impact we're having and will evolve and be added to.</p> <p>LC reported a teaching and learning review was carried out across the Trust. Key points noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The focus is on groups of learners as the same issues seem to be pertinent within all the schools – the 20% of children with more challenging circumstances at home and closing those gaps. Some schools are doing this well and will inform strategies. • Higher ability also emerges as an issue and we are working on a strategy with school leaders on development of middle leadership and curriculum development. • We are looking at how schools strategically plan for improvement. • We are looking at staffing models and performance review process and how these feed into school improvement. 	

- We are working on supporting RI schools to best utilise the expertise they have.
- BG and LC are working on a CPD plan which will include some onsite and some offsite training. Aim is getting subject leaders to work collaboratively and seek external effective measures.
- Three programmes are being developed across all schools looking at learning behaviours, early language, and resilience. Aim is integration into the curriculum.

Directors commended the thoroughness of the work done so far presenting a baseline, evidence and strategies to address.

LD queried the importance of coaching and if action learning groups across schools could be used. LC confirmed these are planned but named enquiry into practice groups as historically leaders and middle leaders have been averse to action research.

LD asked in what timeline we can expect to see benefits of the action plan. LC confirmed realistically we should see impact on outcomes in the summer after next (2022). We expect to see data indicators, but also changes in work cultures and improvements in practice. LC/BG will work into CPD plan what success will look like.

LC reported there is a population in each school with very high needs and high levels of trauma, and while we need to do the best we can for them we also recognise the impact that has on rest of population. We need a high level of trained nurture resource to get those children back into the classroom to give them maximum life chances, and provision to support social and emotional need so they can engage with cognitive processes.

CD questioned looking ahead, does this feel doable. LC confirmed yes, but will be a process of changing hearts and minds of a proportion of staff, raising expectation levels, and giving staff and students' ownership of learning.

CD reflected then in terms of feeding down through schools, LC works with staff at the coalface and LACs monitor locally. LC confirmed the real mechanism for change will be developing the skills of stronger teachers in MATS who go on to become a MAT wide voice but have to build in capacity first. One consideration is how SPG groups could be involved.

BN questioned how is the position affected by using temporary staff in schools. LC confirmed we have used project staff to work with school leaders, and will continue with additional funding from DFE. We are offering a 2 year contract for the reading post and will then review. The inclusion role should be a permanent one. As we identify need we can shape requirements and expect to be drawing expertise from within the trust to work with us and develop heads' capacity (succession planning).

TB confirmed the offer is being shaped in discussion between schools and school improvement team. LC explained as we look at each aspect of practice we will develop leads for that aspect (ie higher ability) to take it through the

<p>curriculum. BN queried do we have capacity to draw on professional expertise of the staff. LC confirmed we believe we do in the approach we are taking. BN stated it is on us as directors to create a system where staff and students can shine.</p>	
<p>7. Catholic Life Postponed until next meeting.</p>	
<p>8. Trust plan TB noted the Trust plan was put together by the whole trust team and whilst it is moving ahead current circumstances are creating some short notice variations. It will take us into the next academic year.</p>	
<p>9. AOB Policy approval moved to a by email item outside of meeting.</p>	