



Standards Committee Meeting
Tuesday 7 May 2024 at 17:00 – 19:00
via MS Teams

Those Present:		
Peter Castleton	Director /Committee Chair	PC
Andrew Child	Member/Chair of Board of Directors	AC
Colin Bradley	Director	CB
Also Present:		
Warren Carratt	Chief Executive Officer	CEO
Michelle Smith	HR Manager	MS
Jacky Tattershall	Assistant CEO – Quality Assurance & Improvement	JT
Richard Webster	Strategic Development Lead	RW
Lyndsay Foster	Governance Clerk	LF
Naomi Cooper	Advisor	NC
Phil Bradley	Advisor	PB
Rosey Andrassy	Advisor	RA
Victoria Morris	Advisor	VM
Apologies:		
Gillian Askew	Director	GA
Mark Greenwood	Director	MG
No Apologies:		

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	Actions
<p>1.1. To receive apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies were received from GA and MG.</p>	
<p>1.2. To accept apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies were accepted from GA and MG.</p>	
2. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS	
<p>2.1. Chair to determine any items of urgent business to be considered</p> <p>There were no items of urgent business.</p>	
3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	
<p>3.1. Individual Governors to declare any personal, business or other governance interests on any item on the agenda</p> <p>There were no declarations of personal or business interest received.</p>	
4. APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES	
<p>4.1. To approve the minutes of the following meeting:</p> <p>The minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 23 January 2024 were agreed.</p>	
<p>4.2. Review of Action Tracker</p> <p>The outstanding actions on the action tracker were reviewed and updated.</p>	
<p>4.3. Matters arising from the Minutes</p> <p>None raised.</p>	
5. ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED	
<p>5.1. Standards Committee Report</p> <p>JT reviewed the report and highlighted that there is an increased number on the rolls of a number of our special schools. The Willows has recently joined the Trust so this has also added to the increase. The Trust is looking at how it can extend provision and utilise the spaces it has, due to increased numbers across its schools.</p> <p>JT discussed page 4, section 1.1 of the document which shows progress made against all priorities and actions that are in the school improvement framework.</p> <p>The Trust has two qualified OFSTED inspectors in the central team, enhancing our understanding of OFSTED's expectations and ensuring that our schools are better aligned with the inspectorate's priorities.</p> <p>Staff development remains a top priority and we have recently forged a new partnership with the National Institute of Teaching to provide support for teaching assistants (TAs) to advance in their careers.</p>	

The Extended schools commission has undergone review and the contract has been extended for an additional five years. We are currently exploring the establishment of a partner charity that will involve all schools within the trust.

The challenges encountered during the spring term have primarily revolved around refining processes, especially those related to quality assurance and enhancing that activity's focus on areas for improvement highlighted in the last inspection. These processes are central to our quality assurance efforts in future and are aimed at enhancing our schools' performance in inspection.

PC asked about the decrease in average numbers on roll in special schools for Sheffield?

JT explained that this reduction was due to the de-amalgamation of Becton and Kenwood, as well as the initial low enrolment at Discovery, although this has since increased with the cohort. JT reminded the committee this was an average, and that total numbers on roll at increased in Sheffield.

AC asked how the TA toolkit is going to be implemented and delivered to staff?

JT stated it will be mandatory for all staff to undergo training, increasing school capacity. This evidence-based model will be initially delivered to senior leaders, who will subsequently roll it out to Teaching Assistants.

AC asked whether the TAs have accepted this is coming?

JT confirmed yes, all Heads have been a part of the development and there has been no resistance from the workforce.

AC enquired about section 3.2, questioning whether it pertained to central team staff or school employees?

JT clarified that it's a combination, but primarily involves central team staff.

AC asked how much notice does the trust central team have to give the school if they want that particular member of school staff for trust work?

JT explained that school staff are presented with a year's overview as it is all forward planned, from the CSIF away day in July.

JT provided a succinct summary of section 4 of the report, highlighting improvements in attendance and reduction in persistent absence. Notably, the Becton hospital provision has been excluded from these figures, enhancing clarity.

CB inquired about persistent absences, seeking clarification on what it refers to?

JT confirmed the definition, specifying that it pertains to absences exceeding 10%, and that the % of PA is a % of overall absence e.g. of 100% of absence in schools, 54% meets the persistent absence threshold.

CB inquired about Becton hospital and Chapel House, questioning if they both contribute to the hospital percentage?

CEO explained that these had been separated out to provide more clarity on attendance per setting.

CB asked if Chapel House has more students and requested a breakdown of its composition?

CEO responded, explaining that it's challenging for students at Chapel House to attend school full time as many are school refusers who are too unwell to attend full time education. These students are dual-registered and referred by mainstream schools. They require sign-off from a GP or consultant to be deemed medically too unwell to attend and therefore be referred to Chapel House. A new attendance coding system will be implemented from September which will provide more clarity on eligible sessions and what activities a child should or shouldn't attend.

JT noted that with hospital provision, there are no national benchmarks available. All attendance trends are under examination with assistance from Joanne Cliff.

CEO mentioned that Kenwood has experienced a significant increase in placements since last year

PC inquired about Hilltop and its persistent absence rates?

JT responded, stating that Joanne Cliff is collaborating closely with the school. They've encountered issues with coding but are actively working to address them. Progress should be noticeable as they move forward.

PC shared information about a meeting he attended with the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) from all Trust schools, noting that these meetings are expected to continue. He found it to be a valuable way of assessing the status of safeguarding within schools.

PB asked how frequent the meetings were planned?

PC stated they are expected twice a year.

PB disclosed he will be at the next meeting and will liaise with PC regarding future meeting dates and arranging attendance.

JT addressed the behaviour section of the report, mentioning a planned 5-day review at Bader Academy concerning the pre-suspension practice in classes. There are no concerns regarding the threshold being met for suspensions, they are deemed valid and appropriate. However, the trust and the school Headteacher want to determine whether the school is taking all possible measures to prevent suspensions from reaching this level by having consistent, effective behaviour management practice in classes. Consequently, a deep inquiry piece of work will be conducted during the summer term, involving staff and pupils to gather their perspectives.

PC asked regarding safeguarding Doncaster referrals that are subject to child protection plans have gone up nearly 50%, is anything going on in Doncaster that would influence that?

CEO mentioned they weren't aware of anything significant, noting that Doncaster thresholds are typically slightly higher than other LAs.

PC suggested it might be worthwhile to monitor this figure to see if any trends emerge or if there are any changes over time.

JT highlighted that, specific to Crags, SATs are scheduled in the coming weeks, which will reflect the school's priorities and outcomes. All pertinent information will be made available for discussion at the summer meeting.

AC enquired about section 5.5 with the number of 2nd cohort level 3 apprentice TAs?

MS confirmed it was 23 but a few have since dropped out so it is now about 16.

AC asked MS how much interest has been received from the new cohort?

MS confirmed its quite low at present around 12-14, and that more marketing is required.

AC enquired about the presence of incentives?

MS confirmed that the roles for staff to transition into are available but if there isn't much movement from other staff, so progression opportunities are limited.

PC suggested utilising subject leaders and their experience for mentoring purposes with experienced staff assisting less experienced members. JT stated that the team is exploring subject lead development and packages similar to the TA toolkit over the next 12 months.

PC asked if there's a desire to expand the groups?

JT stated its a common theme from Headteachers away days but due to schools offering 16/17 subjects it has an impact in teaching and learning within school.

PC asked if officers can confirm what the Children's University is?

JT confirmed that the Children's University is a national charity where children receive rewards and points for participating. VM expressed admiration for the initiative highlighting its benefits for families, schools, and children, especially in trying activities they may not usually engage in. VM also mentioned they are applying for a better offer for SEN children. RW added that the Children's University is linked to the forest schools' program, which is beneficial for students, along with the awards program.

JT mentioned that the support and challenge process has been ongoing and has been reviewed over the last term. A two-year cycle has now been completed. The dashboard and summary reports, which capture the outcomes of the Quality Assurance and Intervention Framework, can be found on page 26 of the report.

PC asked about section 6.7 and the Trust's thoughts on how to change the processes. Is there clearer stipulation about how schools are allowed to make radical changes?

JT stated that the new process will have safeguards around that and will be agreed at the annual support and challenge board meeting. There will also be an annual health check focused on the quality of education.

<p>ACTION: CEO/JT to provide verbal feedback on general changes to QA from Heads</p> <p>Appendix 1, a document from Extended Schools, is included in the report for information purposes.</p> <p>PC conveyed gratitude to AH in the central team for providing a great overview.</p>	<p>ACTION: CEO/JT 16/07/24</p>
<p>5.2 CSIF Delivery Plan</p> <p>Discussed as part of the Standards Committee report.</p>	
<p>5.3 Dashboard Report – Confidential Report</p> <p>Report for information with 5.3.1 & 5.3.2 also provided for information.</p>	
<p>5.4 Safeguarding & LAC Report</p> <p>Report for information.</p> <p>PB brought up the terminology "LAC" (Looked After Children) and suggested changing the title to "Children in Care." CEO expressed no objections, noting that "LAC" is simply a statutory abbreviation. All attendees agreed to change the title accordingly.</p> <p>ACTION: JT to inform Joanne Cliff that future reports refer to 'Children in Care' instead of LAC</p> <p>AC enquired about the report, particularly regarding the 124 early help cases and the reason why Abbey had the highest number at 16?</p> <p>CEO explained that the primary reason isn't education related, given school aren't the lead worker, and therefore it will relate to some wider familial issues. Abbey has a high volume of pupil premium pupils. Consequently, there is a greater need for involvement from various agencies and additional support from these agencies.</p>	<p>ACTION: JT 16/07/24</p>
<p>5.5 Employee Opinion Survey Report</p> <p>MS provided an update on the report, noting that and the Trust had received a larger response compared to the last survey in 2022. The responses have been overwhelmingly positive for the trust, with 98% of respondents expressing drive to be in work and 94% looking forward to coming in. These were seen as very positive highlights. Joanna Hedge in HR has compiled an action plan along with a report to present to Headteachers, outlining how the trust can support and implement necessary changes moving forward. MS is collaborating with JT and the team through Support and Challenge to work with the Heads and support the actions identified in the survey, aiming to streamline processes and reduce meeting time.</p> <p>Health and well-being benefits were discussed, including the access staff have to Westfield Health. Additionally, rewards and discount schemes were highlighted. The cycle to work scheme is ongoing and employee voice network groups are available for staff to participate in.</p> <p>PC inquired if there have been any lowlights?</p>	

<p>MS confirmed that there haven't been any and everything is moving in the right direction. Joanna Hedge in HR has also re-sent information on corporate discounts and further information to all staff, making them more visible on the portal.</p> <p>CEO mentioned that the only concern raised was that 7% of staff felt their gender hindered their progression on the career ladder, and this is being looked at in more detail.</p> <p>CB enquired about potential follow-up actions, particularly considering the anonymous nature of the survey. CB suggested exploring opportunities for flexible working?</p> <p>CEO responded by stating that there are numerous flexible working schemes available including job shares and early retirement plans. Headteachers can review these options and determine the next steps to take.</p>	
<p>5.6 HR Scorecard</p> <p>MS provided an update stating that overall staff turnover is currently low and stable. They are closely working with Matthew Sorby at the central Trust regarding the data. Absence data has shown improvement in the January figures. However, there are currently several staff on maternity leave and sickness rates are notably high at Hilltop, Coppice, and Kelford. Overall, the absence rate has slightly increased since January with 10 schools experiencing an increase while 6 schools have seen a decrease.</p> <p>PC asked can MS get some comparison data in result trends for the next meeting?</p> <p>ACTION: Comparison data for trend analysis for summer meeting, add an extra column of days lost and percentage to make clear, with month by month trend.</p> <p>AC asked what turnover of staff is like as we approach year end term for the academic year?</p> <p>MS explained that at the time of the next Standards meeting there will be more information around teaching staff. Teachers need to inform the Trust on their intention to leave by 31st May and support staff up to 1st August.</p> <p>ACTION: MS to add resignation column in the table for staff leaving.</p> <p>AC asked what kind of recruitment work is coming to HR?</p> <p>CEO informed the committee that he doesn't feel there's more demand on HR as our schools tend to do their own recruitment especially for TAs.</p>	<p>ACTION: MS 16/07/24</p> <p>ACTION: MS 16/07/24</p>
<p>5.7 Risk Register</p> <p>Report for information.</p>	
<p>5.8 Minutes of the Spring Term Schools' Performance & Scrutiny Board.</p> <p>Report for information.</p>	

6. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS	
6.1. To consider any other urgent business agreed by the Chair There were no urgent business items to discuss.	
7. CONFIDENTIALITY	
7.1. To consider the confidentiality of any items discussed during the meeting None raised.	
7.2. To consider any areas of risk discussed in the meeting None.	
8. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS	

Monday 16 July 2024	5 – 7pm	MS Teams
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Minutes approved by Trust Board of Directors

CHAIR	SIGNATURE	DATE
A CHILDS	A CHILDS	16/07/24