

Real Life Learning Trust
Meeting of the Board of Directors
20th October 2016 - PART 1

1. APOLOGIES

All Directors were present therefore no apologies received.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

YW declared that she is a Director at Bennett Brooks - and would abstain from any decision regarding item 9.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the meetings were accepted as an accurate record, and the chair signed a copy for retention on file by the clerk.

4. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising other than to set meeting date for Standards Committee.

Action: Governors on Standards Committee will consult diaries and agree date for next meeting.

5. DECLARATION OF AOB

- a) The following AOB were identified:
- b) Term holiday dates 2017/18
- c) Key actions required by the MAT
- d) Languages
- e) Calveley Neighbourhood Plan - to be taken under item 7

6. MEMBERSHIP

Changes to membership:

- RH had moved to become a Member of the MAT and not a Director.
- VMc had been appointed as a Director by Members of the trust.

Outcome: VMc to ensure that legal papers are updated with the amendments.

Clarification of roles within the Trust

| Position held | Date of appointment | Term ends | Specific role | Committee? |
|--------------------|---------------------|-----------|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Director | | | | |
| Bev Dolman | 01/09/16 | | Staff Director | Standards |
| Elizabeth Ford | 01/09/16 | | Vice chair | Finance and Audit Pay panel |
| Jo Edwards | 01/09/16 | | Pupil Premium, PE | Pay panel Head Teacher PM |
| Laura Leather | 01/09/16 | | Chair, SEN | Standards - EYFS |
| Neil Duncalf | 01/09/16 | | Health and Safety | Standards |
| Fiona Sloyan | 01/09/16 | | VC, Training & dev | Head Teacher PM |
| Penny Holding | 01/09/16 | | Safeguarding | Head Teacher PM Pay panel |
| Yvonne Wood | 01/09/16 | | Finance | Finance and Audit Pay panel |
| Lesley Latronico | 01/09/16 | | RE, Collective Worship | Standards – KS2 |
| Verity McKay | 22/09/16 | | | Standards – KS1 |
| Nick Brown | 21/09/16 | | Staff Director | |
| Melissa Parry | 15/09/16 | | Staff Director | |
| Member | | | | |
| Richard Hastie | 22/09/16 | | Chair | |
| Laura Leather | 01/09/16 | | | |
| Elizabeth Ford | 01/09/16 | | | |
| Kath Edwards | 01/09/16 | | Responsible Officer | Finance and Audit |
| Jeff Turnbull, DBE | 01/09/16 | | | |

Outcome: Director link roles are to be refined, placed on the portal and used to update the website.

7. MEETING FEEDBACK

Inaugural meeting of Members of the trust - 22nd September 2016

A record of outcomes had been made and w

- ill be circulated but these include:RH elected to the Board of Members.
- KE had been appointed and the Responsible Officer (Internal Audit).
- VMc was appointed as a Director.
- Agreed to meet bi-annually unless the need arise for more.

Cheshire East meeting and Kingsley Field Development

The Chair and the EHT had met with Mark Bayley and Cheshire East colleagues to discuss the need to increase primary provision. The new developments in Nantwich (Queens

Drive in construction and Kingsley Fields approved) would put considerable strain on primary schools with current capacity being exhausted within 2 years. The council are considering all options, which includes the provision of a new school. The rationale and process is still to be determined. Cheshire East need to plan any new build carefully, as if building starts too soon, places could be filled by those children outside of catchment - start the build too late and there would not be sufficient places to accommodate new properties.

Q: Can places at the new school be ring-fenced for the new developments?

A: No.

Outcome: EHT to keep Directors informed of developments.

Calveley Neighbourhood Plan

A Neighbourhood plan is being pulled together by the Parish Council in Calveley. Consultants are being appointed to support its development. Part of the process involves working with children of the school. A survey and follow up focus groups had been held to ask the children what they want to see in the village in the next 15 years. Lots of interesting ideas to put forward and the interview group had created mind maps of the suggestions.

One of the issues that had been raised by a child was that they caught their fingers in the locks of the changing room doors - this will be looked in to as a health and safety concern.

The team would like to relay thanks to the classroom teachers for their support and to the children for taking part.

Outcome: To review the changing room doors.

Outcome: To pass on thanks to teachers and pupils.

8. ACADEMY VISION AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

Vision

Following recent stakeholder feedback a final Academy Vision was submitted to directors for approval.

Outcome: All Directors agreed to the new vision, which will now be placed on the web site.

Terms of Reference

The trust needs terms of reference for each of its committees.

Committee TOR

- Standards Committee TOR - complete - all Directors approved.
- Finance and Audit Committee TOR - yet to be finalised.
- Pay Panel TOR - yet to be finalised.
- HT performance management TOR - yet to be finalised.

Link Role TOR - shared on the portal

- Safeguarding - to be finalised.
- Chairs TOR - complete - all Directors approved

- Finance - to be finalised
- H&S - complete - all Directors approved
- RE - complete - all Directors approved
- Collective worship - all Directors approved
- Pupil Premium - complete - all Directors approved
- PE - complete - all Directors approved
- Training and development - complete - all Directors approved
- Vice Chair - complete - all Directors approved

Outcome: All completed TORs were approved by all Directors

Outcome: TOR to be finalised need to be done so by end October via email.

9. FINANCE

To appoint Auditors

YW declared an interest in this item and refrained from being involved in the decision. A competitive process had been undertaken to appoint an auditor. From four applications, the panel had invited two to interview to explore their bid further. The two interviewed were:

- Howard Worth - higher costs - but more comprehensive
- Afford Bond - least expensive - with the possibility to increase service for a fee.

Q: Do we get a named manager?

A: Yes

Q: Are they like for like?

A: As explained above there is a difference, and Afford Bond were slightly cheaper, but offered slightly less.

KE (Member of the trust and not present at this meeting) was on the selection panel and had sent though her written recommendations on which auditor to appoint. Her recommendation was HW due to it being more comprehensive.

Q: Does best value mean that we need to take the cheaper quote?

A: Best value is the used to get the best quote - if you chose the higher priced bid, then you need to state why - in this case it is because it is more comprehensive and better value.

Outcome: Directors took a vote on the appointment of auditors. two abstentions (one due to a declared interest) all others (10) agreed to the appointment of Howard Worth.

Outcome: The Vice Chair will write to the two applicants informing them of the Trust's decision.

To discuss and approve allocation of central costs

YW explained that as part of the combined finance system central costs needed to be attributed to each school. Central costs are those costs that are shared across the two schools, such as: staffing, subscriptions, the Bursar, software, meeting costs etc. Directors discussed the best way to split these costs, given the difference in pupil numbers.

Outcome: It was agreed that staffing costs would be split as agreed per member of staff - so in the example of the EHT this would be 60/40, Bursar 50/50. For other cases, it was agreed that per pupil costs would be used and aggregated for each school. All Directors agreed.

Approve Manual of Financial Procedures

The financial procedures manual was near completion - however there are two points that YW wanted to raise with the Directors:

Point 49 - the EHT to review all bank transactions - Directors discussed this process.

Outcome: EHT to review monthly transactions, KE as RO to check. All Directors agreed.

Point 50 - Before this point can be satisfied, YW and the bursar need to be clear what needs to be printed off regularly. This had not been clarified during the training - or in follow up requests. The training had been very poor, and they had asked for a free day from the provider - however they had not got back in touch. The Academy also needs a stamp for invoices.

Outcome: Directors voted (all) to approve the Financial Manual subject to points 49 and 50 being resolved.

Outcome: EHT to contact CE of financial package company to expedite training.

10. POLICY APPROVAL

To discuss and approve the Safeguarding policy

Outcome: All Directors confirmed that they had read and approved the new Safeguarding Policy, which will now include a written date and approved date.

To discuss and approve the Social Media policy

Outcome: Directors discussed the content of the policy and approved it - needs to be changed to Directors and include an approved date.

To discuss and approve the Equality Objectives policy

There was some concern that the focus on this was purely at narrowing the gap and whilst this is hugely important - so too is maintaining high standards for all children.

Outcome: All Directors approved the policy with a change of wording to highlight the above.

To discuss and approve the E-Safety Policy

Outcome: Following a s discussion all Directors approved the policy.

To discuss and approve the Admission Appeals policy

The EHT tabled the policy and highlighted that any changes needed to go out to consultation with parents. Directors sought clarity over:

Q: Do we have provision within the policy for Summer babies and the deferral process?

R: No as this is parental choice and will be advised by the admissions team.

Q: Directors asked for clarification over the subscription order and whether SEN should be higher in the order than that of a Looked after child.

R: EHT will seek clarity over the order particularly about SEN and LAC.

Q: There is no provision in the oversubscription criteria to protect families of multiple births where one is SEN for example. Guidance is available on CE website.

R: EHT to check if additional guidance needs to be given in the policy.

Outcome: All approved subject to the above points being clarified and a slight change if wording to the policy.

To discuss and approve the Whistle Blowing policy

Outcome: This policy had been deferred for email approval

To discuss and approve the Complaints policy

Outcome: This policy has been deferred for email approval

11. 'KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN EDUCATION GUIDELINES

Outcome: All Directors discussed the new guidelines and confirmed that they had all read them. A copy will be placed on the portal.

12. WEBSITE

The governance sections on the websites need updating to ensure that the academy is compliant.

Outcome: EHT to resolve access issues to backend of the system for governors and will also correct the governance landing pages to be compliant by 28th October.

Outcome: All governors to draft a pen portrait and send to FS by 14.11.16 to upload against each Director.

Outcome: Code of conduct will need to be reviewed at the next Directors meeting before uploading.

13. SID

Directors were pleased with the addition of emotional wellbeing within the SID - following their previous comments. The document now seems very comprehensive.

Q: How is it updated?

R: Half termly reviews take place to update the SID

Q: How do staff feel about the SID?

R: A staff Director stated that it was good to be involved, also groups of staff across the two schools lead areas - creating ownership.

Outcome: All Directors agreed to the updated SID - and asked that when items are complete that the completed date is also shown.

14. HT PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

FS reported to Directors that the EHT's Performance Management had been held w/c 17/10/16 alongside the schools' School improvement partner. Dates would be needed for the mid-term, and next academic year.

Outcome: Head Teachers Performance Panel to review dates to meeting mid-term and also October 2017.

15. PARKING

The EHT reported that she had been approached by a parent with a blue badge who had asked for permission to park on the school carpark at drop off due to a disability. A detailed discussion took place - and the main area of concern was the size of the carpark, and how it would present H&S risks to allow a car to park whilst a parent walks the child in to school. Directors wanted to do all they could to help, however they felt that they needed more information to make sure that they made the right decision for the family and the school.

The parking at the school is inadequate, and needs to be looked at - but this would be a long-term discussion with Cheshire East and would not resolve this immediate issue:

Outcome: EHT to contact the parents to find out more information

Outcome: EHT to begin conversations with CE and land owners regarding extending parking facilities.

16. CHESHIRE EAST DIRECTORS REPORT

Directors reviewed the report, and had covered the Keeping Children Safe item earlier.

17. GOVERNOR TRAINING

Nothing the report since the last meeting.

18. AOB

Term holiday dates 2017/18

Cheshire East Council have different holidays from Cheshire West and Chester Council. Acton and Calveley form part of the Nantwich Education Partnership group of schools and had agreed to align their term dates. As in this years' case the NEP had decided to use Cheshire West dates not Cheshire East.

For 2017/18 Cheshire East is w/c 21st October 2017 and Cheshire West is w/c 27th October. However the EHT was absent from a discussion within the NEP and the decision had been taken to go with the Cheshire East holidays.

This poses problems for the Academy in that whilst they feed in to Malbank they equally feed in to Cheshire West Schools. Three options were presented.

- 1) go with Cheshire West;
- 2) Go with Cheshire East and the NEP
- 3) change to Wednesday to Wednesday.

Outcome: Governors discussed the implications and all agreed to go with option one - Cheshire West and Chester - not in line with the NEP.

Key actions required by the MAT

As discussed at previous meetings there are certain requirements to be met within a set period of the Academy going live. These are:

- Within 28 days provide governance details to EDUBASE.
- Within 6 weeks submit a budget forecast - in this case before the 28th October 2016.
- Within 4 months submit a self assessment.

Outcome: EHT to ensure EDUBASE details are up to date.

Outcome: Budget forecast is near completion and will be submitted within the timescales

Outcome: The self-assessment will be scheduled in.

Languages

The EHT outlined the new curriculum and the requirement to teach a language. As an Academy they do not need to follow the curriculum. The Academy does not currently have a language teacher, and the secondary schools charge a lot to use their teachers. Ofsted seem to be focusing on languages and science currently - and whilst science is strong within the school, language is not.

Q: Can we afford? Previous meetings have highlighted a tight budget - will this put pressure on resources?

R: Budgets are tight - and there is a need to improve results in other areas.

Q: Even if we could afford - could we deliver quality language tuition?

R: We would need to agree which language we chose to teach. A Director recommended a french tutor who supported her previous school, the clerk had also been taught by the tutor.

Outcome: EHT to investigate costs and options for Directors to decide on whether to teach a language for the remainder of the year.