



Ember
Learning Trust
Five schools, one aim

TRUSTEE MEETING OF THE EMBER LEARNING TRUST
HELD AT HINCHLEY WOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL
TUESDAY, 17th October 2017 - 8 AM

Board members:

FC - Fiona Collins, Headteacher - Hinchley Wood Primary School (HWPS)
NF - Nick Fry, Headteacher - Thames Ditton Juniors (TDJ)
MP - Monica Paines, Headteacher - Long Ditton Infants (LDI)
RH - Rebecca Hicks, Headteacher - Thames Ditton Infants (TDI)
DG - David Gumbrell, Headteacher, - Long Ditton St Mary's (LDSM)
BH - Bronach Hughes, Chair of Governors - Thames Ditton Juniors
TG - Tessa Griffiths, Chair of Governors - Thames Ditton Infants
BF - Barry Fairbank, Chair of Governors - Long Ditton St Mary's
AW- Andy Withers, -Co-operative Schools Network
MS - Matthew Sossick, - Kingston Univeristy

In attendance: CW - Colin Winchester - Company Secretary

ROS - Rebekah O'Sullivan Clerk

DT - Darryl Taylor, Headteacher - Claygate Primary School

LW - Linda Wells, Chair of Governors - Claygate Primary School

JS - Jeremy Scroxtton, Foundation Governor

1 Apologies

CS - Colin Stevenson, Chair of Governors - Hinchley Wood Primary School

SI - Stephen Ind, Chair of Governors - Long Ditton Infants

2 Declaration of Pecuniary Interests

None.

3 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on Tuesday 20th June 2017, were agreed as an

accurate record.

4 Matters Arising

Arrangements are now in place for students to come into all schools from Kingston University.

Ruth Murton is now booked for 31st October 2017. Three governor representatives from each governing body are welcome to attend the session. It was agreed that headteachers would not attend.

It was noted that both actions under Any Other Business were still outstanding.

Leadership skills in schools and accreditation by KU.

Action: DG to ask KU

AW to investigate organising a Cooperative Trust conference in the Surrey area.

Action: AW

5 Trustee Changes

CS regretfully offered his resignation due to increased work commitments. This was accepted and CS was thanked for his support. HWPS will at their next GB agree who will be proposed as their new governor trustee on the ELT Board..

DG will be leaving LDSM at the end of the term and will therefore no longer be a Trustee. DG's resignation was duly noted and he was thanked for all the input and work that he has done for the Trust. DG offered his continued involvement with the Trust going forward.

An EGM will take place at Claygate and the only items for discussion will be joining the Trust. Provided this is approved at the EGM, the proposal will then go out for consultation.

DG met with the co-chairs of the governing body and headteacher at Hinchley Wood School, to further promote the Trust. They were positive about exploring the idea and in particular the Nursery to University model and are keen to explore further. DG plans to carry this forward with another meeting before the end of December. He suggested that someone else from the board joins for the meeting and continues the relationship. NF offered to participate.

Action: DG and NF

6 Update on School Admissions - Surrey CC charges

TG received a response from Surrey CC yesterday. Surrey are working through the issues and are not able to give a final response at the moment, but are highly unlikely

to change their position.

It was agreed that the issue should now be escalated, as the costs to Trust schools is around £8,000 per year. It was noted that Kerry Randle has assisted and an initial response was obtained. However, the Trust wants to continue to pursue the issue.

The board agreed that the next step should be to contact the local MP for a response. The government has encouraged schools to work together and this unfairness around the admissions charges are likely to be the same for other foundation schools. In the meantime, an email would be drafted to David Green, keeping KR updated.

Action: TG

There was confirmation that the Apprenticeship Levy is not being taken from the Trust schools.

7 Land and Asset Transfer Update (Surrey CC proposed restrictive covenant circulated with agenda)

CW summarised the current status and updated the board on the land and asset transfer. There are two options, either to amend the legal documents to specifically allow community activities within the restrictive covenant for revenue gain or to ask for no restrictive covenants..

It was agreed that the simplest way forward would be say that the schools would abide by the Schools Standards Frameworks and, therefore there would be no need to include any restrictive covenant.

Action: CW to ask Stone King to return to Surrey with this proposal

NF reported that there is a unique situation at TDJS in respect of Mercer Close, which is a private road. TDJS need to confirm whether there are any expectations on the school in relation to this road.

8 Foundation Governors - progress from last meeting including role of the foundation governor, membership, AGM (two proposal documents circulated with agenda)

JS updated on the meeting held with the Foundation governors, where there was much discussion about what a Foundation governor actually is.

They agreed that everything that all the schools do should be consistent with the ethics and the principles of the Ember Learning. The governors want to develop some type of tool to allow an audit of how each schools ethics and principles fit with those of the Trust. JS suggested that the Trust would own the ethics and

principles, but that the individual headteachers would own the benchmarking. The group had not yet discussed the Foundation governor role in ensuring adherence, so this remains unclear.

JS asked for agreement in principle from the board on whether this is a suitable way forward. JS explained they would want to work with each of the headteachers to develop the matrix of ethics and principles further, consolidating these results into one document which could then be applied to all the schools.

The board were concerned that this would be another audit on top of lots of others and another burden. It was agreed that the word audit should be removed, as there is little appetite for this. It was noted that the benefit for the children in any such exercise should also be checked. Should this be something to consider in the future, as the Trust is still quite young and time is needed to ensure ethics and principles are embedded.

It was agreed that the cooperative values of the Trust are important and that these should be communicated in each school to staff and pupils, as well as to parents. Any communication should show what we do in practice. JS circulated an illustration on how the Trust may want to communicate to parents. It was agreed that the communication strategy should come from the board.

Action: All

There was further discussion on the role of the Foundation governor. This needs clarity so that this group is able to feedback and participate in the Trustee Meetings. AW noted that the Ember Learning Trust is breaking new ground in respect of this role and expected that Foundation governors should take the lead in developing the membership.

It was agreed that the Board should give a clear strategic direction to these governors and that the strategic plan should be developed to include the Foundation governors in order to achieve this. A smaller group of Trustees will meet towards the end of November or beginning of December to follow up on the strategic plan.

Action: All

9 Communication (including website, newsletter and logo design)

The logo will be re-designed to include a 6th image, whilst Claygate make a decision.

The board passed on their thanks to CW for the updates he provides for the schools to put on their websites.

10 Financial Report

CW provided an update in SI's absence. He noted that an AGM would be needed in

the next year.

The board recorded their thanks to Colin Stephenson, who has agreed to certify the accounts now that he has stepped down from his role as a Trustee.

DG noted that he is currently a signatory on the Ember Learning Trust bank account. Someone else will need to take on this responsibility. NF agreed to do this.

Action: NF

FC raised a query about outstanding invoices and needed clarity that the Trust does have the money to pay these.

There was a discussion on how the Trust ensures that it receives its share of funding for partnerships. This will need to be monitored.

11 Elmsbridge Partnership Funds and Other Sources of Income

NF noted that it had been difficult to find the right people to discuss finance, as no one is directly responsible for the funds. Approximately £55k still remains within the Elmsbridge Partnership. There are some outstanding debts to be paid from this, but once these are settled the money should come to the Trust. NF agreed to continue to follow this up and look for commitment that the monies will be with the Trust by the end of the term.

Action: NF

In 2018/2019 the funding will come directly to the schools. A decision on whether the schools pay this to the Trust will need to be made.

Action: All in 2018/2019

12 Business Managers

ROS explained that the School Business Managers (SBM) are in regular contact either by telephone or email over matters that arise during their work. This method of communication provides a valuable source of advice and information for all. The SBMs are considering some longer term contracts and whether there are benefits to negotiating as a group. One example being IT support.

ROS asked all headteachers to look out for a consultation from Surrey CC on the future of their statutory services which are currently carried out by Babcock. This relationship will end in March 2019 following a change in the law. Foundation schools will need to look carefully at the future arrangements.

Action: All heads

TDIS will be seeking a new Clerk in early 2018, this may provide opportunities for clerking across all the schools, as well as the Trust itself.

It was agreed that the presence of an SBM at the Trustee meetings was useful and should be maintained, even if a separate Clerk is appointed.

13 Shared INSET (Feedback)

MP has gathered the data from the questionnaires handed out at the shared INSET. She circulated a document to the board which summarised the feedback. There were 61 responses and over 90% found the day either useful or really useful. She passed on her thanks to HWPS who made everyone feel welcome.

Feedback on the other things that the Trust can work on included; keeping the momentum going, setting up networks across the schools now and shaping professional development going forward given budgets.

Foundation governors should be able to assist in exploring other funding streams available.

Action: Foundation Governors

MS updated the board on new in school mentoring training. This would not only cover mentoring students, but would include aspects such as staff wellbeing and resilience. This may be available for the Trust.

KU are also recruiting maths specialists on to their PGCE course in the next year. It is possible that these students will be available to participate in research at the Trust schools.

AW mentioned the availability of online Pearson training. DG agreed to take this forward.

Action: DG

14 Peer Challenge and Support Project

NF updated on the recent Peer Review at TDJS. This was the first review to take place and was facilitated by Chris Byrne facilitated the process. TDJS decided on three key themes as areas for focus. The school found the process incredibly valuable and beneficial. He noted that planning and organisation in school before the review was key.

It was agreed that working together very useful, however, all felt that more reflection time should be built into the timetable. However, it was recognized that this was a learning process. All headteachers agreed that they are going to benefit and learn from going into each other's schools.

The next Peer Review is at HSPS in November 2017.

15 AOB

Data Protection Act

ROS updated the board on the changes expected as a result of new Data Protection legislation which will apply from 25th May 2018. Schools will need to appoint a Data Protection Officer (DPO), who will need to be an individual with legal knowledge of Data Protection law and be sufficiently independent from the decision making within a school. The SBMs have proposed that the Trust seek to employ a DPO who can act for all schools in the Trust. This would be an efficient and effective use of resources and would ensure a consistent approach across all schools. It was agreed to refer this back to Surrey for advice.

Action: RH

Emergency Lockdown

FC updated on lockdown procedures following the recent incident at Tolworth Girls. Surrey still keen to do training, however it does not make sense to do this as a group, as our schools are all very different. The cost of a review is approximately £400 and involves a desk top review of the Emergency Plan involving staff who would be involved in a lockdown response.

16 Date and Time of Next Meeting

There was some discussion about the frequency of the meetings and it was agreed that once the Strategic Plan is in place, meetings could be scheduled once a term.

Tuesday, 16th January - 8am (RH to Chair)

and then second week of each half term following this:

Tuesday, 27th February - 8am

Tuesday, 24th April - 8am

Tuesday, 12th June - 8am

17 Appointment of Chair for Next Meeting - NF to hand over to RH

The meeting ended at 10.00 am.