

Minutes of the Board of Directors' Meeting held on Tuesday 29 September 2015 at 5:30pm in the Board Room, Silverstone UTC

Present: Doug Newman (DN) Chair
Stuart Pringle (SP) Vice Chair
John Sinclair (JS)
Zoe Spavold (ZS)
Stuart Banks (SB)
Neil Patterson (NP) (Principal)
Julia Schumacher (JSc)
Nik Ives (NI)
Stuart Wesselby (SW)
Simon Evans (SE)

In attendance: Kirstan Boynton (KB) Clerk to the governors
Vanessa Stanley (VS) Deputy Principal

1. Welcome, apologies and quorum

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Daniel Hyman and Paul Atkinson.

1.2 The meeting was declared quorate.

2. Declarations of interest

2.1 There were no further declarations of interest.

2.2 It was noted that the register of directors' interests was due to be updated.

2.2.1 **Agreed:** The Clerk would distribute the forms for directors to complete following the meeting.

3. Safeguarding update

There was nothing further to report.

4. Health and Safety update

There was nothing further to report.

5. Minutes of the previous meeting

5.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2015 were approved and signed by the Chair.

6. Matters arising from previous minutes

6.1 (21.1.2015) *Governor evaluation* – NP would circulate the governor evaluation forms for all the governors to complete and return.

6.2 (21.01.2015) *New Governor training* – It was noted that there were a number of governors that had not yet attended governor training.

Action: The Clerk would look into arranging joint new governor with Daventry UTC.

25.3.2015

6.3 (M27) *2017 Admissions policy* – NP would pick this up in the SLT meeting. The governors requested that it be made clear that when assessing the year 10 applications the emphasis was on the attendance of testing not the result of the test itself.

Action: NP would bring the draft policy to the next full governing body (FGB) meeting.

8.7.2015

6.4 (M6.2) *Safeguarding monitoring: Provide a template of what things governors should be looking for when monitoring.*

Action: JS/DN to meet and action before the next FGB

6.5 (M6.4) *Work experience* – JS reported that he had a list of potential companies that would be interested in providing placements and that it was a work in progress, but all information would be passed onto NP.

Action: JS would pass on to SB any work experience vacancies currently available.

6.5.2 The Principal reported that he was looking to put a programme together for the year 13 students to introduce them to the different opportunities available to them including apprenticeships and university. This would be delivered hopefully in December 2015, with a display in the sixth form area with details of all the opportunities. Any input from governors as to available apprenticeships would be welcomed.

6.6 (M7.3.2) *governor appointment term* – The Clerk reported that the articles of association were silent on the appointment term if the governor in question switched from one type to another therefore it was a decision of the board.

Agreed: The term would continue from the date of original appointment regardless of the change of governor type during the term. No further action required.

(M8.1.2) *Governor vacancies.* This item was covered later in the meeting.

6.7 (M11.2.1) *Parent voice forums.* VS reported that these had been organised for the coming term.

6.8 **Action:** feedback would be provided to the next FGB meeting.

(M11.3.1) Parent led events: This item was ongoing.

6.9 *(M11.11.5) Review of progress/improvements of Ofsted 'areas for improvement':* This item was covered later in the meeting.

6.10 *(M12.2) Management accounts to be distributed:* This item was covered later in the meeting.

6.11 *(M12.3.1) 2015/16 Budget:* This item was covered later in the meeting.

6.12 *(M15.1.1) SENCO meeting:* It was noted that the SENCO link Governor was absent from this meeting, therefore the Principal would follow this action up after the meeting.

6.13 *(M15.3.1) Teaching and Learning Link governor report:* the deadline was amended to the 8 December 2015.

6.14 *(M18.1.1) Board and committee dates:* FGB dates had been confirmed and circulated. The Principal would arrange committee dates and circulate once his new PA had started.

Action: Principal to arrange and circulate committee dates in due course.

6.15

(M19.3) Changes to Company secretary and registered office: All the changes had been completed. No further action.

6.16

7. Appointment of new parent and staff governors

7.1 The Clerk explained that all governors are required to be listed at Companies House under the Companies Act 2006. New director information forms were distributed for completion.

Action: The Clerk would make the necessary filings at Companies House.

7.2 It was noted that there were still vacancies for a parent governor and a staff governor.

Action: The Principal would progress the appointment of a new parent governor following the half term with the process to have begun by the next FGB meeting, with expected completion by Christmas.

8. Principals report and KPI's

- 8.1 The Principal presented his report and the KPI report.
- 8.2 Departmental reviews of the exam performance have been extremely helpful for all involved.
- 8.3 Following the exam results, the Principal has liaised with other 'outstanding' schools to ensure there are no obvious omissions or errors in what the UTC does and if there were any changes to policies and procedures that could be incorporated to make them more effective. Following feedback, the UTC was confident of ensuring more effective admissions to the correct level exams.
- 8.4 The focus on pupil engagement would right up to the exams and also on assess whole topics rather than sections.
- 8.5 Forecasting of grades would take a more balanced view rather than an optimistic one to ensure pupil and parent expectations are met. Rather than reporting simply on grades, information as to whether they are in the lower, middle or upper areas of those grades would also be reported.
- 8.6 The principal reported that there had been some student behaviour issues reported by the bus company which had resulted in 11 students receiving fixed term bans of varying lengths. It was also highlighted that these same pupils were also known to staff within the UTC. A letter has been sent to parents explaining the situation and the UTC is working with the students and parents to resolve the issues. The situation would continue to be monitored.
- 8.7 The Principal also informed the meeting that it was hoped that a Year 13 trip to Le Mans could be arranged for the summer of 2016. Governors expressed concern over certain issues including safeguarding in terms of long distance driving, the availability of alcohol in bars etc., staff/student ratios, risk assessment and the need for robust planning.

Agreed: Peter Reeves, the staff member in charge, would present a proposal to the next FGB board stating how the trip will be run and managed. This will need to be sent to the County Council for approval also. The report should include the educational and enrichment value of the trip.

- 8.8 It was reported that the Macmillan coffee morning events organised by the UTC had raised over £1k and that the UTC were looking to host the Children in Need fun run again this year. Stowe School had also asked if they could organise one for them too, something the events management students could do.

- 8.9 The Principal highlighted that the 2015 financial year ended under budget, a testament to the hard work put in by staff to keep costs down. A Governor asked whether the

savings had directly impacted the recent results in terms of resource restraints being imposed? The Principal confirmed that staff had not been constrained in any way in their delivery of the curriculum.

8.10 It was reported that whilst stagecoach were now operating 4 of the bus routes for students, reducing the financial exposure to the UTC, it is still expected that the UTC will subsidise travel significantly.

9. Exam results

9.1 A detailed analysis of the 2015 exam results was presented to the board.

9.2 The Principal highlighted that although the A level results were not a good as expected; this had not affected the intended destinations of the students. It was acknowledged that a number of students should probably have not been admitted into the sixth form in year 12 but were to boost numbers. The UTC decided to continue to support them into Year 13 rather than ask them to leave. Admissions would be more stringent going forward. A fuller report would be given in the teaching and learning link governor report at the next meeting.

9.3 A governor asked what Ofsted would make of these results. The Principal reported that under current standards we would fall below the floor levels however under the new Progress 8 measurement we are above the floor measurement. In terms of progress in English, likely to be 'outstanding' with a 'good' in Maths.

9.4 Physics AS & A2 results were poor compared to our GCSE Physics results but those students taking AS & A2 were not taught at the UTC at GCSE level, indicating that next year's results should improve.

9.5 Results of those on the Engineering stream showed that 79% achieved A* - C, with 70% of those on the Events management stream also achieving A* - C.

9.6 A Parent Governor (NI) expressed concern over the assessment grading's with some students not achieving predicted grades by a significant margin. The Chair confirmed that there was no more than 2-3 levels difference but it was recognised that moderation is a source of concern and was being addressed. It was reported that a complaint in relation to the assessments had been submitted to the examining body as their advice was insufficient. The Principal has spoken to the examining body who have acknowledged that the moderator's reports were totally unacceptable.

9.7 A Parent Governor (NI) asked how the disparity between pupil expectations and actual results could be avoided going forward. It was acknowledged that the UTC was as good as it could be in terms of communicating pupil progress directly with parents and this is something that needs to be addressed.

10. Recruitment of students for 2016/17

- 10.1 The budget for the for the following year was based on a 90% retention rate of Year 10 students continuing into Year 11 and a 75% retention rate for Year 12 into Year 13 progression.
- 10.2 Applications for 2016 entries at Year 10 was very encouraging, which was very encouraging. It was reported that there were a number of open mornings planned over the coming year and radio advertising had been commissioned.
- 10.3 A Governor (DN) asked what the pupil recruitment plan was for the next year. The Principal confirmed that the NCC had already sent out letters to prospective pupils for the 2016/17 academic year but that the largest single source of applications was parental recommendations.
- 10.4 Various online marketing strategies had been tried with Facebook and Twitter being the most effective in terms of visibility and cost. A Governor explained that Silverstone Circuits had recently engaged a digital advertising person who they could put in contact with the Principal to further establish a digital marketing strategy.

Agreed: SP would arrange and introductory meeting to discuss digital advertising strategies.

11. Finance committee report

- 11.1 This item was postponed to the next meeting.

12. 2015/16 Budget

- 12.1 The proposed budget for the forthcoming academic year was presented to the meeting. It was highlighted that it was a deficit budget and that this was the first year where a post-opening grant was not awarded.
- 12.2 The Governors discussed the implications of the deficit budget specifically in relation to the KS4 costs of the technical subjects over the academic ones, something that the Baker Dearing Trust has been liaising with UTC's in general about. The Chair reported that the spaces in Years 10 & 12 needed to be filled in order to achieve the budgeted figures.
- 12.3 A Governor (JSc) asked if there were any other sources the UTC could generate income from. The Principal explained that he was working with Tresham College to deliver apprenticeships in conjunction with companies. A Governor confirmed (JS) that there would be a centralised apprenticeship hub but that there were no further details available at this time.
- 12.4 A Governor asked what the UTC pupil capacity was. It was explained that the building was originally designed to accommodate 576 students however this was calculated

before a fit out with machinery etc. so the actual number would be below that. The Chair estimated that the UTC to accommodate another 100 students above the current level before new buildings would be required, which would obviously mean capital spending, which the UTC did not have the funds to do. Any new buildings would have to be government funded or privately funded by companies.

- 12.5 It was also noted that staffing costs as a percentage of income was comparatively low against other schools meaning that it was sustainable at the present time.

Agreed: The deficit budget was approved for submission to the EFA.

13. Audit committee report

- 13.1 The Chair of the audit committee confirmed there were no further items to report other than the approval of policies later in the meeting.

14. Link governor reports

- 14.1 Teaching and Learning ("T&L") link Governor (JS) explained that a T&L sub committee had been formed to review the exam results. The committee met with each department head for up to 2 ½ hours. A full draft report would be issued following the meetings with the department heads. Each HoD has presented the committee with action plans to show how they will make improvements. It was noted that there was large discrepancies around the quality of these plans between departments and that some sharing of best practice between HoD would be beneficial. The action plans would also form part of the self-improvement plan and would be reviewed again in 6 months.

- 14.2 The Governors recognised that this process would benefit from a common governor at each meeting to improve consistency but that the process had been incredibly useful to both the staff members and the governors themselves. The Governors thanked the Heads of department for their honest contributions and commended the widespread ethos of continuous improvement that was apparent.

- 14.3 Following these meetings it was reported that all subjects had both excellent and disappointing exam performances and that there was no specific subject or pupil population that had performed badly.

- 14.4 There were a number of themes that became apparent which the Governors were made aware of:

- Excessive staff turnover and loss of key staff at important junctures giving rise to an unbalanced mix of experienced and inexperienced staff may have had an impact on performance.
- There was not enough collaboration with other schools to moderate coursework. All the action plans picked up on this and it is being addressed.
- There was concern over the reliability of the OCR examining board, VS. confirmed that use of OCR was being phased out.

- It was noted that perhaps staff had been too lenient on pupil choices of the exams there are entered into and that the pupil needed to be entered onto the right course and the right exam, not necessarily the one they wanted, whilst understanding that it was a small school so everyone's first choice could not be accommodated.
- Behaviour has improved.

14.5 A Governor (SB) observed that a good atmosphere and level of positivity was seen in recent visits. The Principal confirmed that the attitude of the SMT has been to encourage and support to better and improve things for everyone. A Governor (SP) asked if the support received by staff from the governors was sufficient? The Principal confirmed that he was happy with the level and appreciates the challenge governors' face in supporting when they are not available all of the time.

15. Skills audit

15.1 The need for an induction pack for new governors including a skills questionnaire was discussed.

Action: The Clerk would investigate this and report back to the next meeting.

15.2 The Principal confirmed that he had distributed a skills audit questionnaire for completion by the governors.

Action: Governors to complete questionnaire and return to the Principal as soon as possible.

16. Dates for committee meetings

16.1 The Principal confirmed that these dates had now been confirmed with the relevant committees and that his new personal assistant would minute these meetings.

16.2 A Governor asked which governors were on the health and safety committee as it was not clear due to changes in the governing body.

Action: The Principal would check the records and confirm via email.

17. Approval of policies

17.1 A number of policies as listed below were presented to the meeting for approval. It was confirmed that the audit committee had reviewed these policies and made any necessary changes:

1. Assessment, Reading and Reporting Policy;
2. Controlled Assessment Policy;
3. Examinations policy;
4. Examinations appeals policy;
5. ICT Acceptable use policy; and
6. The Scheme of Delegation.

