

**Minutes of the Board of Directors' Meeting held on Thursday 7
November 2019 at 5.30pm in the Board Room, Silverstone UTC**

Present: Doug Newman (DN) Chair
Stuart Banks (SB)
Ray Brooks (RB)
Julie Dark (JD)
Jenny Harte (JH)
Neil Patterson (NP) Principal
Crispin Robinson (CR)
John Sinclair (JS)

In attendance: Miriam Lakin (ML) Clerk
Vanessa Stanley (VS) Deputy Principal

1. Welcome and Apologies and Quorum

1.1 The Chair welcomed those present, noted apologies and confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

2. Declarations of Interest

2.1 There were no declarations of interest in addition to those already submitted.

3. Ofsted Inspection

3.1 The Chair explained that the reason for the meeting to discuss the conclusion of the recent Ofsted inspection that the SUTC required improvement in three areas. He stated that he wanted to reflect on the inspection result and also on the key areas in which the trustees would need to be particularly vigilant and to challenge.

3.2 It was noted that the Principal had the support of the whole Board in his management of the SUTC.

3.3 The Chair encouraged trustees to be open, honest and frank in their discussion of the draft inspection report.

4. Complaint about the Ofsted Inspection

4.1 The trustees had received a letter to the Inspectorate written and sent by the Chair and Principal complaining about some of the conclusions drawn by the Inspector.

4.2 In particular, the Principal reported, the Inspector had concluded that the SUTC limited equity of access to cultural capital, and that this had a disproportionate impact on SEND students. The Principal explained that in respect of English, some students were focused on language rather than

language and literature. The rationale was that they would struggle to achieve a Grade 4 in both, especially as literature was a closed book exam which required the memorisation of quotations. Focusing on achieving a result in English Language ensured that they were better prepared for further study or a future career.

- 4.3 Trustees commented that the volume of students affected by this seemed large. The Principal stated that it was around one class per year.
- 4.4 The Principal confirmed that parents were always consulted and that the English literature element was removed in Year 11.
- 4.5 Trustees asked if other schools took the same type of actions. The Principal confirmed that they did. It was also noted that elements of English literature could be covered as part of the language course and therefore the definition of cultural capital used by the inspectorate could be regarded as narrow.
- 4.6 In respect of issues raised by the Inspector about PSHE, trustees asked how many students the Inspector had spoken to about this subject. The Principal stated that he did not know. However, the Inspector had asked Year 10 students who had been in the SUTC a few weeks and had spoken about what they had learnt in previous schools. Trustees noted that a report from Peter Gayle had initially drawn a similar conclusion about the ability of students to articulate fundamental British values, however, on completion of his second report he had revised the initial judgement. Trustees noted that the way in which the questions were asked could make a difference to whether students were able to articulate British values. The Principal noted that due to the SUTC's work using the 'Votes for Schools' package, students had been exposed to and involved in a large number of contemporary debates on issues such as policing, democracy and tolerance.
- 4.7 Trustees asked about the circulation of surveys to staff. The Principal reported that due to a change in the system for distributing surveys, they had not been sent out. The inspection team had handed out a number of surveys.
- 4.8 Trustees reported that they had previously raised concerns about leadership in one area of the SUTC, having undertaken visits and sat in on meetings. The Principal reported that this weakness had been identified and included in the SUTC SEF.
- 4.9 Trustees asked about the other themes raised in the staff questionnaires. The Principal stated that he was aware of and dealing with most staff issues. He felt that the feedback from teaching staff had been disproportionately

negative and that this did not accord with the views of the majority of the staff. He further thought that the comments of the support staff in regard to the availability of training had been interpreted negatively by the inspection team.

- 4.10 Trustees asked the Principal to consider if there was a difference between what staff reported to the SUTC's management and to the inspection team, and the reasons for this.
- 4.11 The Principal noted that over the past year, reports had been received from Peter Gale (DfE), Neil Bramwell (SIP) and the Lawrence Sheriff School. All had identified issues which had been accepted and action had been taken to resolve these. None of them had identified problems with SEND or PSHE. These seemed to have influenced the final judgement of the Ofsted inspection team more than previously.
- 4.12 Trustees asked if the other reports had been submitted as part of the inspection. The Principal confirmed that they had, and that they were not referenced in the final judgement.
- 4.13 The trustees agreed that there were certain fundamental issues on which the Ofsted report appeared to be at odds with the inspection framework. The trustees agreed that there were valid criticisms on which it was correct to challenge.

5. Complaint about the Ofsted Report

- 5.1 The Principal reported that he had submitted a separate complaint about factual and other errors in the Ofsted report. This was being considered alongside the original complaint.
- 5.2 The Principal took the Board through the comments and corrections he had made on the Ofsted report.
- 5.3 Trustees noted that the work of the Achievement, Learning and Teaching Committee, and regular learning walks were not acknowledged. However, for the future it could be ensured that the timing of ALT meetings was suitable to ensure that all draft Development Plans could be considered.
- 5.4 Trustees asked how the classes observed by the inspection team were selected. It was reported that for the deep dive subjects, all of the classes taking place were observed. For other subjects, a range of stronger to weaker practice was observed, in accordance with the inspection framework.

- 5.5 In respect of evidence which the inspection team did not request, for example the SUTC's own baseline testing data, trustees asked whether the onus was on the SUTC to provide that data. The Principal reported that the Inspector had refused anything that was not national performance data. It was reported that this was in line with the Framework. However, if Progress 8 was not applicable, inspection teams were supposed to be interested in what leaders had done in response to the evidence they had received.
- 5.6 Trustees asked how the teachers were able to articulate how they responded to the evidence. The Principal reported that inspectors had dropped into lessons for up to 10 minutes.
- 5.7 The Chair asked the Board to confirm that it was comfortable with the Principal's comments and complaints with regards to Quality of Education. The Board confirmed that this was the case.
- 5.8 Trustees questioned their collective ability to gauge the health of the SUTC in a rapidly changing external environment where expectations were changing. It was suggested that the composition of the Board should change to include at least one other person in a senior position in an Ofsted regulated school. The Chair reported that a suitable volunteer had been identified and that he was following up.
- 5.9 The Chair asked whether the Board was confident that the quality of education did not meet the Ofsted criteria for 'requires improvement'. Some trustees commented that in one department, there was less confidence. However, it was also noted that undue weight had been given to some areas of education and that evidence about the 6th form, which in terms of student numbers was half of the school had not been admitted. These would have presented a different overall view of the SUTC.
- 5.10 The Board turned its attention to considering the judgement in the 'Personal Development' category.
- 5.11 Trustees asked if the inspection team had looked at a scheme of work. It was reported that they had not and had refused to consider anything produced by Votes for Schools through which the SUTC delivered a great deal of its British values, moral and spiritual education. As a source of assurance in this area, the Principal showed the Board the recent subjects that had been covered by Votes for Schools. Trustees agreed that the content was comprehensive and broad. Trustees noted that there was a question about how vested the teachers were in delivering the content and how well the students absorbed it, given that some had not been able to articulate to the inspection team what they had learnt. The Principal stated that he was

content for any trustee to visit to observe SMSC (spiritual, moral, social and cultural) delivery. The Principal also noted that further enhancement took place, for example the employability elements of the SUTC included personal development and subjects such as how to present yourself in an interview. There was also a range of pastoral support, and extra-curricular activities such as sport.

Stuart Banks left the meeting.

- 5.12 The Board discussed whether the judgement did imply a general problem with the delivery of SMSC, given the strong work the SUTC did in this area. Trustees stated that it was difficult to know how many students the inspection team had spoken to about this area and whether this did in fact indicate a general problem.
- 5.13 The Board then discussed the judgement in leadership and management. Trustees strongly challenged the assertion that they focused solely on the SUTC's specialisms and did not have an overview of the curriculum. It was accepted that Development Plans should have been in place sooner and this would be addressed for the next year.
- 5.14 The clear actions taken to support Heads of Faculty in their leadership and management duties were noted. It was recognised that there was one area of weakness. Resolving staffing vacancies in the current year would mean that sufficient time could be devoted to supporting leaders to have difficult conversations and hold staff to account.
- 5.15 The Chair noted that it should be clear what actions came out of the report. The Principal referred trustees to the School Development Plan which set out many actions including SEND training for staff, delivery of SMSC and refreshing the curriculum including life skills for KS5.
- 5.16 Trustees asked what support would be given to those teaching outside their specialism. The Principal reported that training was in place and that during recruitment exercises people with leadership capacity were being sought. Additional support would be given to those needing to develop their leadership capacity.
- 5.17 It was agreed that the ALT and the Board would consider the development plan in detail including who was responsible for each action and the timescales for action.
- 5.18 The trustees resolved to support the letter of complaint and the subsequent comments on the Ofsted report.



5.19 Further to this, the Chair agreed to draft a letter to the Chief Inspector on behalf of the Board and to circulate this to the Board for their comments. JH agreed to suggest some questions under the Freedom of Information Act.

6. Date of Next Meeting
Tuesday 3 December

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Chair
Signed

Date