

School Improvement Committee Report 31st August 2018 -1st January 2020.

The committee was dissolved from autumn term 2019; this report includes some commentary on the new structure.

The School Improvement Committee met 5 times from 31 August 2018 - 31st August 2019. It had established its terms of reference to hold the CEO and VCEO to account for the performance of all our schools. The committee comprised three trustees. The detailed minutes were circulated to all trustees and to members as soon as they had been agreed.

Each meeting was attended in person by the CEO, VCEO, and CFO in order to answer trustees' questions and to follow up on requests for additional information. Despite efforts to increase attendance, a few meetings were close to being not quorate. It was then decided to recommend to trustees that the school improvement committee be dissolved and school improvement be a focus for a full trustee meeting, half termly, from September 2019. The emphasis being on the lead school improvement trustee (former chair of committee) to lead the trustees in challenge during meetings.

One of the guiding principles behind the formation of the MAT is school improvement and the primary function of this committee was to champion school improvement across the MAT, in concert with ensuring value for money. Another guiding principle behind the formation of the MAT was the intent to provide education for our students from ages 4-19. To that end, cross-phase working was a standing agenda item to encourage this as a long term initiative whilst acknowledging the many initiatives that are already taking place; for example the DMAT student council; pen portraits of vulnerable students moving from primary to secondary school.

This committee also acknowledges the need for the educational and financial sustainability for small primary schools and the need to develop them further.

A challenge for this committee was the consistency in the reporting data from the Schools. Data collection has been aligned in the primary schools and from September 2018 they shared a common platform in Classroom Monitor. However there were significant teething problems with this system and it is only in the autumn term 2019 that reporting from all primary schools has been consistent. We are working towards common data collection timelines in the secondary schools and improvement has been made towards this.

Neil Swait, the DMAT school improvement lead, continued to follow a cycle of external reviews of the primary schools based on previous areas for improvement with a new emphasis on the curriculum. These visits helped leaders to triangulate the impact of the implementation of their curriculum intent, and the progress made towards other targets on their school improvement plans. Following Neil's visits, if schools are classed as high priority, they are visited on further occasions (e.g Bridestowe, Highampton and Exbourne primaries). From September 2019, academy committee governors have joined Neil Swait for feedback sessions and answered questions that are likely be posed to them by an OFSTED inspector. Neil has been pleased with governor responses and has offered guidance for improvement in a few cases.

Governors on academy committees continue to undertake visits to monitor their school's school improvement plans.

Significant challenges remain for school improvement. These include:

- Meeting the needs of our most vulnerable students; the demographic of our schools is changing and the percentage of students in receipt of the pupil premium is increasing year on year.
- Improve progress data for those pupils in receipt of the Pupil Premium in all Key Stages.
- Improve progress data for those pupils with special education needs in all Key Stages.
- Ensure that the curriculum offer in each school meets the demands of the new OFSTED framework.
- Improve KS2 progress scores.
- Increase the number of pupils taking the suite of Ebacc subjects.
- Receiving, termly, an overview of in-year progress data for all year groups from all schools; trustees must have confidence in that data, and be assured that thorough internal and external moderation is taking place.
- Ensuring that robust challenge is evident in the minutes of Trustees' meetings and Academy Committee meetings to drive school improvement.

The academy committee of our largest cluster the Dartmoor Federation will split in September 2019, creating a separate academy committee for Okehampton College in order to facilitate the above.

The incorporation of the school improvement committee into the full trustees' meeting is in its early stages. It has been successful in that more trustees have been exposed to information around school improvement and the challenge and debate ensuing. However, understandably many trustees have found the sheer amount of information overwhelming. We are looking at ways to present the information with a more risk related focus rather than delving into the weeds of data. The scrutiny of data should be happening at academy committee level, and we are monitoring academy school improvement minutes to check this is happening; giving support to clerks and boards if it is not apparent, e.g. Neil Swait and the VCEO are delivering training to all academy committees in the second half of the spring term on the new OFSTED framework. In addition academy committees have been encouraged to dissolve their committees and bring school improvement into full governor meetings, mirroring the trustee board structure of meetings.

Tania Skeaping

Former Chair of School Improvement Committee (committee closed July 2019), January 2020

