

**Minutes of the virtual meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 5pm**

**Present virtually:** Mike Cadman, Chair  
John McCourt  
Zoe Whiteman

**In Attendance:** Elizabeth Barneveld, Head of School – Duke of Lancaster  
Lawrence Chapman, Regional Director SEND and Outdoor Learning  
Patrick Hamilton, Head of School – Sunrise  
Scott Gaskins - School Improvement Lead  
Graham Cowles, Governance Professional

**Apologies:**

**Absent:**

**Action**

**1. Welcome and Apologies for absence**

The Chair welcomed members to the Academy Council meeting and started the meeting on time.

**2. Finance Update for governors and school leadership**

The SEND Director shared a presentation of the new finance structure for EEGT, and explained the way forward for schools' and Trust financing in relation to the SEND provisions.

Highlighted points were:

- For the last academic year, most schools were in deficit, but the carry forward for 2024/25 was £177,000k.
- AP spend was at least £500,000, excluding the transport spending.
- Heads of Schools were informed in advance of the need for reduction of supply and AP.
- Additional funding for band 1 students has been sought.
- Trustee reporting by the school is shown as shared in the presentation.
- SEND projects remain a priority.
- Central Services cost reduction measures are being investigated, to ensure more funds are used for the benefit of students.
- EEGT, like SENDAT, uses a centralised model for financing.
- The roles and work of the Finance team were shared.
- KPIs were shared, as well as the budget and forecasting cycles.
- Budgetary challenges were explained – SEND funding has remained static nationally for more than ten years; Tutoring grants are not being offered, compliance and government policy needs to be balanced with the SEND budget.
- Restricted and unrestricted funding was explained.
- Capital fund planning and growth opportunities, including moving Chalk Hill to Horringer Court, were explained.
- Council Members asked SENDAT plans to balance the very limited AP use with challenging behaviour in both schools.
  - L Chapman noted that it may be possible to release some funding to Sunrise to use for AP. SENDAT is seeking to develop its own AP internally, such as farmland for Sunrise, and the Millennium Centre for the Duke of Lancaster (DoL) use.
  - It was noted that behaviour is down to communication, so the schools will try to offer a more vocational element in AP.
- Members pointed out that fencing at DoL was not installed to separate Primary and Secondary students, thereby presenting a safeguarding issue.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ L Chapman will check the issue. EB was allocated the fencing as part of Safeguarding funding. Dale Collins will be alerted.</li> <li>○ Numbers of students have increased, bringing in more funds. Therefore, the budget will have some funds that can be relocated if necessary and possible.</li> </ul>	LC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need for new carpets at Sunrise was raised. These were apparently promised but still remain the same.</li> </ul>	LC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The fire doors at DoL were also raised as an issue.</li> </ul>	LC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• L Chapman noted that there are no minibuses currently available for the two school's use, but L Chapman is checking fleet management availability with EEG.</li> </ul>	LC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members asked how the 6-week trial period of placements can be put to Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ L Chapman replied that SENDAT is working with local authorities to accomplish that, especially for persistent non-attenders, but must act on it legally.</li> <li>○ Trauma informed methods may help.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	LC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P Hamilton asked if there was any impact with Ros Somerville leaving her post. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ L Chapman noted it is too soon to know, but that he will meet with Sarah-Jane Seymour to flag concerns. L Chapman will feed back to Sunrise Academy.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• P Hamilton mentioned an intake of inappropriate students and asked how to proceed with such cases. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ L Chapman is dealing with the case in question. As there are little resources in the area, the profile variety of the students often causes its own challenges.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• L Chapman left the meeting at this point.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	LC
<p>3. <b><u>Declaration of Interests</u></b> No conflicts of interest in relation to the items of the agenda were declared.</p>	
<p>4. <b><u>Minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2024</u></b> The minutes of the meeting were <b>agreed</b> as an accurate record.</p>	
<p>5. <b><u>Matters arising from the meeting held on 26 September 2024</u></b> Three of the matters arising from the previous meeting - two items under agenda point 9.3 and one from point 11 - were completed. The remaining item - under agenda point 11 - was ongoing.</p>	
<p>6. <b><u>Quality Assurance Update</u></b> The School Improvement Lead provided a verbal update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SILs have carried out paired Quality Assurance work and will visit all schools in the next few weeks.</li> <li>• Graham Alcock will be carrying out Behaviour and Attendance reviews.</li> <li>• SILs are seeing some good improvement of teaching &amp; learning.</li> <li>• The SILs have first-hand experience of the challenges facing the Heads of both schools, as well as the issues mentioned to L Chapman in agenda item 2.</li> <li>• Quality of teaching is going well and the staff at the schools have done well.</li> <li>• Staff absence levels have improved, teachers' teaching skills tend to improve attendance.</li> <li>• Marking feedback has been well received.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	
<p>7. <b><u>Duke of Lancaster – half termly report</u></b> Members received and considered the report provided and E Barneveld summarised the report.</p> <p><u>. 3 highlights</u></p>	

- Leadership is acting strategically for the students. Changes made after half term have helped in teaching and learning.
- Recruitment: one teacher started 12<sup>th</sup> November 2024, two Teaching Assistants have started in the past two weeks. An HLTA is due to start on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2024. Interviews are being conducted for more STAs, to fill gaps.
- Routine changes: G Alcock has suggested routine changes and will follow them up. The beginning-of-day routine is being reviewed to set clear expectations for students, which has led to 45 minutes of better utilised time.

#### • Quality of Education (focused on baseline of students)

- Members noted the focus on staff presence and learning engagement.
  - Staff need to be aware of even slow progress, as this is still progress.
  - A full complement of staff makes a big difference, as the right levels of staff are in the right place. The school suffers from not having full staffing.
- E Barneveld commented that she has put some students up to Band E to increase High Needs funding.

#### • Behaviours and Attitudes

- Members asked if all students' EHCPs are in place and up to date.
  - E Barneveld replied that as SEND Services are to be involved, this can slow contact for minor matters.

#### • Personal Development inc. careers

- Routine changes, noted in the highlights above, have made better use of students time and encouraged improved student outcomes.

#### • Staffing Issues

- Members asked how near to staffing capacity the school is now.
  - E Barneveld replied that there are job adverts in place for more potential staffing.
- Members next queried staffing challenges on light of the necessary pupil: teacher ratio.
  - E Barneveld commented that she wasn't initially aware she could have supply but is now aware and has consistent staffing until the end of the calendar year.
  - E Barneveld noted that some supply staff are suitable, whereas others aren't. All supply staff need training, and teachers need to be explicit in their instructions to avoid difficulties.
- Members asked if E Barneveld is getting support from Tara Walker, the Assistant Head.
  - E Barneveld pointed out that the school is lacking one teacher, who has been on long term sickness leave. The absence impacts on the need for supply.
- Members noted that leadership and management clarity is needed.
  - E Barneveld agreed that time together was needed. The senior leadership team meeting seems to be only about managing issues and employing tactics rather than strategy.
  - E Barneveld added that senior leadership is becoming a good team.
- Members raised the point that where a trusted adult is missing, this can impact students negatively.
  - E Barneveld acknowledged that for staff leave, evidence was needed for time off, rather than quickly agreeing at short notice.

#### • Admissions

- Referrals are an issue, as DoL leadership are often unable to have input of the relevance of certain students due to arrive at the school.
- Members related a case of a dysregulated child at Sunrise who was not being physically restrained due to their profile of need.
- S Gaskins pointed out that meetings with SENDAT's Central Team are willing to meet with E Barneveld to discuss issues if she has capacity.

#### • Attendance

- Attendance is currently at 78.6%.

#### • Staff training and professional development

- Three staff members are continuing Trauma Informed training.
- NPQ training was not discussed at this meeting due to time constraints.

#### • Exclusions and Suspensions

- A one-day suspension was recorded, but no permanent exclusions.

#### • Ofsted readiness • Safeguarding update and discussion

- Members noted regarding a potential safeguarding issue, that on a recent visit one student was causing difficulties and child-on-child abuse. It was acknowledged that, generally, the situation is better than last half term.
  - E Barneveld commented that the same students will cause the same issues.
  - Slow progress in behaviour is being achieved, and Police assembly visits are making students aware of racist language and anti-bullying legislation.

### **8. Sunrise Academy – half termly report**

Members received and considered the report provided and P Hamilton summarised the report.

#### • 3 highlights

- Attendance in 2021/22, was 49%, but has since improved to 66%.
- Sunrise has recruited 3 STAs, and a new teacher is to start in January 2025.
  - This teacher is now undertaking TI qualification training. She has a Masters Degree in SEND.
  - Sunrise has interviewed for another teacher, after one resignation which caused negative impact.
- The recent Moving into Adulthood event went well and was very well attended. Evidence of the event was shared at the meeting.

#### • Quality of Education (focused on baseline of students)

- Members asked for clarification of the Pastoral timetable sessions.
  - P Hamilton explained that the Pastoral team use 45 minutes sessions to do team building, or students learning to work with their emotions.
  - Sessions are designed to develop the students and this impacts on their learning.
- The Maths teacher has received extra support to raise the quality of teaching and leading in lessons. They are being monitored for the need for increased quality of teaching and not just giving the minimum.

#### • Behaviours and Attitudes

- Behaviour details are shown in the report on page 4.

#### • Personal Development inc. careers

- Personal development for students progress is shown in the report on page 4.

#### • Staffing Issues

- Funding is due to for AP, which will help with student regulation.
- The Science teacher is still concerning. They have been given incremental steps for improvement but has shown signs of progression.

#### • Admissions

- Inappropriate referrals were not discussed at this meeting.

#### • Attendance

- As seen in the school's highlights, Sunrise is expected to improve further with aspirations.

#### • Staff training and professional development

- CPD is in place to cover marking, feedback and learning objectives.

#### • Exclusions and Suspensions

- One permanent exclusion case is detailed in the report, along with other fixed-term suspensions on page 6. Packages have been put in place for each of the suspended children.

- One of the Academy Council Members served on the Suspension panel, and has recommended to Sue Snowdon, on the SEND Education Excellence Committee, how to monitor and improve the school's processes.

**• Ofsted readiness • Safeguarding update and discussion**

- Members visited Sunrise on 8<sup>th</sup> November and remarked on the great improvement of the school from his first visit when it first joined SENDAT.
  - Details are given in the completed First Hand Feedback form.
  - Members saw structure to the learning, which demonstrated that the vocational work was productive.
  - Members only concern was the welfare of staff, as there is a need for a high level of resilience.
  - Members added that the Trust needs to be aware of staff limits, as regards mental health, to ensure appropriate support.
  - PH agreed with the assessment.

**9. Executive Head update**

- The School Improvement Lead added his thanks to the two Heads of School for their continued dedication to the students and staff in their care.

**10. Update from Chair's meeting and Trust, and items of concern to escalate to Leadership team and/or Governance (via Gov. Prof.)**

- The Governance Professional informed the Academy Council members that the reporting templates used at Academy Council meetings are due to be revised to streamline reporting and ensure they are stringent enough for scrutiny.
- The Governance Professional reminded the Academy Council members of the Ofsted governance training on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 4pm.

**11. Any other business**

- No further business was raised.

Chair thanked all for their attendance and the meeting was concluded at 6.40pm.

**Date of next meeting – 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025**