

**Minutes of the virtual/in person meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 5pm**

**Present physically:** J Finch, Chair

**Present virtually:** J Rawlings

**In Attendance:** C Brickley, Head of School – Stone Lodge/Peile  
G Alcock - School Improvement Lead  
G Cowles, Governance Professional  
L Chapman, Regional Director SEND and Outdoor Learning

**Apologies:**

**Absent:**

**1. Welcome and Apologies for absence**

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

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

The SEND Director led the discussion of the presentation, which explained the finance and EEGT structure going forward. Points highlighted were:

- Sharing of the finance structure under the new Trust.
- For the 2023/24 financial year, most schools showed as in deficit.
- There was a £638,000 spend on independent alternative provision.
- Early in 2023 the decision was made to reduce or eliminate supply or AP use for the following year.
- Reporting to Trustees at school level, gag pooling and reserves will continue with EEGT. The main driver is bringing down the cost of SENDAT Central Services to spend funds at school level.
- There was a 1% carry forward of funds.
- Centralisation versus an autonomous schools model was shared.
- Names and roles of finances and other wider teams is to be published. Sue Prickett is a senior officer in the EEGT Finance Team, to represent SEND interests.
- Staffing and estates remain important overall. Budget setting is to remain centrally, but in conversation with the heads of each school.
- Funding per pupil has remained static at £10,000 but there is variation for other students, according to need.
- Balancing student needs with compliance and government policy is required.
- National Insurance contributions by the employer will increase and other factors are still unknown as yet.
- Financial reporting was demonstrated, with a by-school KPI basis. The breakdown will be shared with Trustees.
- Restricted and unrestricted and fixed assets funding was explained. This includes donations to the schools or Trust.
- Priorities were shared in the presentation.
- Chair asked regarding AP, whether resources sharing from West Suffolk College or Suffolk One could take place.
  - C Brickley pointed out that SLA has its own internal AP to use, which she has begun to share with EEG, but is time and capacity limited.
  - Connections are needed but won't be in place until after the New Year.

**Action**

- L Chapman added that sharing offers is the intention going forward - to see what other offers EEG have.
- There is a team reviewing the curriculum offer, but EEG's offer includes a farm and the café. Empowering futures will be at Horringer Court for specific offers.
- Council Members asked if there was any way to speed up the process.
- C Brickley commented that some things are in place, others will need to be investigated.
- L Chapman added that SENDAT wants to get the same process across the other schools in the Trust. The curriculum and Pathways are to go all through at the Trust's colleges.
- Members asked if there was availability for some to share their skills across the Trust in their area of expertise.
  - C Brickley replied that she will initiate the idea in the new term with Subject Leads.
  - JR asked who C Brickley had approached at Suffolk One College. JR encouraged C Brickley to email the Head of curriculum for Supported Learning, Claire Jones.
  - GA added that supported learning is separate from the sharing of ideas from C Brickley and the Subject Leads.
  - JR will assist with the following up of information and who would act as point of contact at Suffolk One.

CB

JR

L Chapman left the meeting at this point.

### 3. **Declaration of Interests**

No conflicts of interest in relation to the items of the agenda were declared.

### 4. **Minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2024**

The minutes of the meeting were **agreed** as an accurate record.

- GA gave some information based on the request from the last meeting regarding those who received free school meals: SLA has 46.2% in this bracket. The national average is 26.4%, and for Special schools the percentage is 47.4%.
  - C Brickley noted that SLA also sends food vouchers out during holidays to the relevant families.

### 5. **Matters arising from the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2024**

Matters arising from the previous meeting were complete. Govs chase is in progress.

### 6. **Quality Assurance Update**

The School Improvement Lead provided a verbal update, highlighting the following:

- GA has supported schools in the Ofsted window and has been conducting Behaviour and Attendance reviews.
- GA has undertaken leadership training at EEGT.
- Integrated learning has been taking place with the SILs' guidance.
- Inappropriate placements are being monitored and reviewed by GA.
- Both GA and Scott Gaskins (SG) have conducted paired Quality Assurance work with each school's internal QA programme.

### 7. **Stone Lodge Academy – half termly report**

Members received and considered the report provided and C Brickley summarised the report.

#### **3 highlights**

- There continues to be good engagement by students and the school has been building on that by internal AP. This scheme is being reviewed for continuation of success.

- Proactive staff interventions have been successful in regulating behaviour of students.
- Parental evening showed good engagement and 102 in attendance, either in person or by telephone.

• Quality of Education (focused on baseline of students)

- School leadership is focusing on medium term planning.
- Ensuring Phonics vocabulary remains the same, but also building on it.
- Roadmaps for subjects are being implemented in the school.
- Demonstration of progress is being evidenced, with assessments. Whole school working has improved communication across staff.
- New play equipment is needed.
  - G Alcock will share details of past donors to Priory with C Brickley. A grant funding lead is needed.
- Members asked if there was a Carbon Neutral and Climate Action plan.
  - The Governance Professional pointed out that Sue Prickett was the Sustainability lead in the previous iteration of SENDAT.
  - Members will suggest someone from Suffolk Council to help SLA regards their sustainability.

• Behaviours and Attitudes

- Negative behaviour shows as 48% less than the same time last year, due to the use of internal AP and the school environment.
- C Brickley recommended that the EEG Colleges may be able to assist to improve the data further.

• Personal Development inc. careers

- Internal AP measures have resulted in lower behavioural incidents and helped increase student engagement in such fields as Forest Schools, Cooking and Hair and Beauty.

• Staffing Issues

- Challenges of the capacity for extra workload by staff and school leadership was emphasized in the meeting.

• Admissions

- No admissions issues were raised at this meeting.

• Attendance

- Attendance is currently at 89%.
- Staff attendance is slightly lower, but childcare issues are having an impact.

• Staff training and professional development

- Staff are invited to drop into Key Stage meetings to see 'opportunities to increase employability' displays. The displays can be shared with other schools.

• Exclusions and Suspensions

- No exclusions or suspensions were reported at this meeting.

• Ofsted readiness

- Preparation for Ofsted visits is incorporated into the Head's report.

• Safeguarding update and discussion

- Members raised the nine Harmful sexualised behaviour data figures and asked if this was being perpetrated by one person.
  - C Brickley confirmed that one person is responsible for all nine incidents.
  - Online safety (outside the school setting) presented the main challenge, as the child was messaging someone they don't know.
  - Members queried whether some online training is being offered to parents to deter this behaviour.
  - C Brickley replied that was already being carried out and monitored.

8. **Peile Unit – half termly report**

Members received and considered the report provided and C Brickley summarised the report.

• 3 highlights

- Children are positive in learning with other SEND children.
- One student's progress was discussed to show the progress made.

- 88% of students have less than three negative behaviour incidents reported.
  - Quality of Education (focused on baseline of students)
  - The school is shown to be a positive learning environment for students, who enjoy their learning.
  - Behaviours and Attitudes
  - Interventions are reportedly going well.
  - 46% of students have zero negative behavioural incidents.
  - Personal Development inc. careers
  - Students' work experience opportunities were shared to demonstrate progress.
  - Two students are currently attending a hair and beauty course.
  - One student is undertaking a mechanics course.
  - Staffing Issues
  - Staff with young children off school is having a negative impact on coverage of lessons and student continuity.
  - New starters have not always had training due to capacity for training staff to support the students.
  - Induction and probation packages are being reviewed to ensure best use of staffing.
  - Dynamics of female staff at the same stage in life – menopause - is impacting on the work.
    - Members queried whether EEGT has a menopause policy.
    - Governance Professional to check and report back at the next meeting.
  - Admissions
  - No admissions issues were raised at this meeting.
  - Attendance
  - Not-in-attendance figures were shared at the meeting. These are being handled, but some challenges are down to management over time.
  - 92% attendance was reported overall.
  - Staff training and professional development
  - Autism with girls training is being sought to equip staff who are unused to these specific circumstances.
  - Exclusions and Suspensions
  - No suspensions were reported at this meeting.
  - Ofsted readiness · Safeguarding update and discussion
  - The Unit works in conjunction with Chantry to develop Ofsted readiness.
9. **Executive Head update**  
 The School Improvement Lead provided a verbal update
- Both SILs hold weekly visits, tailored to each school.
  - Despite an 8 week-long half term, the positive start being to the term is maintained and well managed by the Head of School.
  - New students remain settled in their school.
  - The school is positive in the face of big changes to funding and Trust leadership.
  - Quality Assurance monitoring is still being offered and improved upon.
  - G Alcock is working with the Head of School on the Self-Evaluation Form and the School Development Plan to ensure the needed areas of Ofsted improvement are being captured, as well as creativity and development.
  - New relationships have had to be allowed for in the new Trust. Adapting to those differing relationships and processes has been a part of the SIL's role and feedback.
10. **Update from Chair's meeting and Trust, and items of concern to escalate to Leadership team and/or Governance (via Gov. Prof.)**
- Reports are noted as differing in template. These will be altered for the next round of reporting.

GP

CB/LC

- The Governance Professional reminded that Ofsted training is on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 4pm-5.30pm.

11. **Any other business**

- The School Development Plan will be added to the next agenda.
- A member of the School Council will be invited to attend a future Academy Council meeting, on Teams if need be.
- SLA's Panto will be held on the last day of term. All are invited to attend.

The meeting was concluded at 6.20pm.

**Date of next meeting – 13<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

**GP**