

Minutes

School Improvement sub Committee Meeting

Date:	5 May 2020	Time:	11:00
Location:	Teams Meeting	Clerk:	Emma Pemberton Personal Assistant to Rob Pritchard, National Director of Education
Attendees:	Jan Renou (JR) Member of Board of Trustees and Chair of meeting) Paul Hann (PH) Chairman of Board of Trustees Rob Pritchard (RP) National Director of Education Tuesday Humby (TH) National Director of Teaching and Training Ian Bookman (IB) Member of the Board of Trustees Nick Hudson (NH) Chief Executive Officer		

	Item	Action	Initials
1.	<p>Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and acknowledged no apologies had been received.</p> <p>The Trustees wished to take a moment to pause in order to remember the sad loss of Emma Clarke from Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy. Emma was a much-loved Science teacher with a bright future ahead of her. The Trust is hugely saddened by the loss of one of our valued teaching staff and Trustees' thoughts and sympathies go out to her family, the staff and all the students at the academy during this difficult time.</p> <p>The Trustees would also like to extend their thanks to the Interim Principal, Tony Rawdin, for his support during this time to the family, the staff and all the students.</p>		
2.	<p>Review of 3 March 2020 Minutes</p> <p>3 March 2020 minutes were reviewed and approved.</p> <p>Actions from March:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sixth Form Sustainability Addressed at this meeting. Alternative Provision: Due to Covid-19 RP was unable to progress forward. Item to be carried forward to July meeting. 		
3.	<p>Impact of the Covid-19 Response Across Ormiston Academies</p>		

	<p>Whilst we acknowledge that the pandemic will be part of this generation’s childhood, our responsibility as educators is to not allow it to be the defining feature of their childhood.</p> <p>The above has been at the heart of OATs response to the current Covid-19 pandemic. In any other year, our focus now would be to support our students to achieve their best in their exams, but current circumstances have overtaken us and impacted on all elements of our daily lives and those of our students and staff.</p> <p>Progressively during March, we identified that Covid-19 would impact on our teaching community. Preparations took place to support academies, focusing on robust business continuity planning to ensure that schools would be prepared for any closure.</p> <p>Following the Government announcement of 23 March 2020, the normal teaching environment of our academies went through an intensive period of change, closing its doors to normal teaching yet remaining open to support key workers and vulnerable students. This created significant number of challenges across the Trust, which we approached in a proactive and practical way to resolve.</p> <p>Daily meetings took place to address a range of issues, and responses were agreed and communicated to Principals daily. Principals were also supported through two weekly regional meetings with their respective Regional Director. Attendance and compliance have been monitored closely across academies. In addition, safeguarding guidance and free school meals (FSMs) were addressed, all the time ensuring clear communication with Principals.</p> <p>Teachers have supported vulnerable groups through daily phone contact with families and supporting delivery of FSMs and food hampers due to the issues around FSM provision nationally. OAT has worked closely with academies to support them through these difficulties so that children remain supported.</p> <p>Over time, OAT adapted and a ‘new normal’ began to form. Academies began to monitor the number of students accessing work online, and their engagement with the system, whilst providing paper copies of work to those without internet access.</p> <p>In addition, OAT have been able to offer robust guidance and support to academies whilst they work through the new GCSE and A level grading requirements. A new system has been set up to help academies access and assess results across all subjects for all students within their academy so that they can make informed decisions on grades for each subject. We are working with academies to ensure that they meet the deadline for submission at the end of May 2020.</p> <p>The Trustees wished to express their thanks to all at OAT and within the academies for the hard work that is going on behind the scenes to support students.</p> <p>Throughout this time the moral of Principals has been commendable. They have adapted well in an ever-changing environment and have sought to support their staff and students to the best of their abilities.</p>		
4.	<p>GCSE and A Level Grading</p> <p>Several academies and students alike have expressed disappointment that exams were cancelled this year. Academies have been working hard to improve results and had expected to see an increase in individual and academy results overall as a result. Our support in delivering robust grading guidance and moderation is</p>		

	<p>imperative so that grades are an accurate reflection of the efforts made by each student.</p> <p>In the coming months it is important that we celebrate the achievements of students receiving GCSE and A level grades this year. The Coronavirus should not overshadow their achievements, and we need students in Y11 and Y13 to feel their efforts have been acknowledged and celebrated accordingly.</p> <p>The Trustees asked if there was any concern around other MATs abusing the system by inflating results. OAT is working closely with other MATs and independent schools in order that a collective approach is applied. Doing this helps to mitigate and minimise the risks of any one academy or MAT abusing the system. Such cases would be quickly identified and dealt with by the DfE.</p> <p>The software used by OAT provides academies with a sense check, using real historic data to support grades. This is not the only measure: grades received from all academies, for all students across the breath of subjects, will be subject to moderation to ensure they are an accurate reflection of work produced.</p> <p>OAT is proud of the workbook software produced. The workbook has been well received by academies and shared with third parties to help provide support during the grading process.</p> <p>Year 11</p> <p>The timing of GCSE results was discussed and the impact this may have on those wishing to complete resits within the current November window. At present the resit dates remain the same but there is an expectation that due to the uncertainty around Covid-19 these could potentially change. At present we can only go with the information we hold so students would need to plan for November, and as such, the reality would be to start revision now in order to prepare.</p> <p>A discussion took place around the subjects covered and the appetite for resits if students have already gained qualifications to access further education. c95% of College applications will already have been made and places offered (grade dependent) by March of this year.</p> <p>For those already thinking of resits, we have resources via OAKS Academy, our own online suite of resources and BBC Bitesize, but any revision will dependent on the willingness of the student to engage.</p>		
5.	<p>Recovery Plans for September 2020</p> <p>RP advised that the intention now is to work on how best we move forward. We are working together with other MATs to try and envision how this will look and work. Schools are dependent upon the directive from Government in order to know what form this will take but we are working on several scenarios to get ahead of the curve and to be ready to act when necessary.</p> <p>We expect there to be a certain level disruption within schools for the foreseeable future, although we hope for the best. Academies will need to adapt to DfE directives, but we hope that a level of flexibility will be allowed at local level to facilitate change to best effect that safeguards and protects both wellbeing and learning.</p>		

Framework

OAT is working with national MATs to try and establish a framework that will encapsulate a range of scenarios around how students could return to school on a phased or partial return.

A discussion took place on the range of scenarios that could potentially factor, along with the benefits and challenges that may arise from in terms of transport, social distancing, HR and premises and finance, all of which cannot be known until a clear narrative is provided by the DfE.

All agreed that supporting students, families and communities should be at the heart any return. Parents and academies alike need to feel confident that provision is robust and supports not only student education but their emotional and physical health and wellbeing, especially for the most vulnerable students.

It is important to remember that some staff/pupils or family members may still be required to shield themselves after some relaxation of social distancing. Work is currently underway by HR to assess the impact this may have on teaching staff within academies so that we can mitigate the impact once schools begin to open. Potential benefits and drawbacks were discussed.

Year 6 Transition

Work is under way to prepare students moving from Y6 into Y7 through current learning and Y7 testing. Students moving into Y7 will take part in a number of assessments in order to identify current levels of learning, which in turn will help inform teachers when planning for the coming year. This will help bridge any gaps in learning and place students in the best position moving through a post Covid-19 year.

This will be done via GL Assessment testing at both the start and end of Y7 across core subjects of English, maths and science. The assessments will be via a suite of tests, some of which can be integrated so as not to become too time consuming. Feedback from academies has been positive: staff welcome the opportunity to be able measure learning so that students can be supported in the best possible way moving forward.

The Trustees asked if these tests will compute to levels. It was confirmed that results will be recognised nationally and sit alongside the national sample and Ofsted.

The Trustees asked how the tests will be marked. All paper testing is marked externally with academies given access to spreadsheets and on-line portal to analyse results. Reading tests are completed on-line, and the training is progressive in terms of difficulty. Results are generated automatically via the software.

A further discussion took place around the centralisation of resources to support the provision of testing across academies.

Year 10 and 12 Support

Discussion took place around any potential impact of Covid-19 for both GCSE and A level students in the coming year and how this may impact on exams in the future. Options and scenarios were discussed at length, including potential issues that may arise. There is an expectation that more direction will be provided by DfE in months

to come. For the time-being OAT are working hard to ensure as many students as possible have access to online learning to help support them through these difficult times.

A question arose as to whether there is any possibility that schools may be asked to return sooner than September in order to support these year groups. Although schools have remained open throughout the course of the past two months, including Easter and half-term, there is no guidance to suggest this will happen over the summer months. Various scenarios were shared, along with the benefits and disadvantages.

Attendance

Attendance over the past eight weeks was shared, providing a guide to demographic variances and the impact of Easter holidays.

Laptop Provision – Supporting Disadvantage Students

Following the recent DfE exercise to distribute laptops to all Y10 disadvantaged students, OAT have received 779 laptops that are presently being distributed across the Trust to aid students working towards their exams.

Remote Access

Academies across the Trust recently completed an exercise to establish the extent of online ‘access’ and ‘engagement’ by students across all year groups. This was discussed in some length and the Trustees asked how OAT compares to other Trusts. It is unfortunate that there is no evidence currently available to make a comparison, but anecdotally OAT’s access levels are very good, and very encouraging for disadvantaged students.

Academies are following up with students to try and improve provision. Academies are working hard to ensure that paper access is available to those that genuinely struggle with online learning.

The Trustees commended the work undertaken to overcome such challenging circumstances.

Enrichment

The Trustees asked whether ‘Enrichment’ will be written into the curriculum moving forward. Significant work has gone into producing a ‘Curriculum Design Training’ suite of resources to provide comprehensive support to academies designing their own curriculum. This has been broken down into nine parts and is currently available on OATnet. Enrichment runs through the modules.

NQTs/Early Career Teachers

The Trustees asked how the process of recruitment of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) is proceeding. Recruitment is going well. Individual academy recruitment was briefly discussed. Overall, the levels remain consistent with last year.

Early career teachers/ NQTs

	<p>Although online provision is extremely valuable, this cannot replace the importance of teachers working in a physical class environment. As a result, teachers are naturally nervous, so OAT are working hard to put in place a recovery package for those joining OAT, around the 'Early Career Framework' so that they receive the support they need.</p>		
6.	<p>Sixth Form Feasibility</p> <p>Sixth form feasibility was discussed in depth, highlighting the challenges academies face financially through lack of cohort, demographics, and the ability to remain sustainable. The benefits of a Sixth form provision were highlighted, and what actions could take place to help retain provision in certain circumstances.</p> <p>Decision paper detailing four proposals were placed before Trustees to review and agree or reject.</p> <p>Outcomes documented below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agreed 2. Agreed 3. Agreed 4. Agreed <p>The Trustees extended their thanks for the work around Sixth form provision.</p> <p>The Chair thanked all for their contributions and confirmed that this issue may now proceed to Financial Oversight and Risk and the Board of Trustees.</p> <p>Eton Programme</p> <p>On a separate note the Trustees noticed some recent publicity in the media around a £1M programme that Eton are running to develop sixth form provision in disadvantaged areas. This could provide useful to investigate. OAT Exec to investigate further.</p>		
7.	<p>Regional Director Recruitment Update</p> <p>HR have been quick to respond to the resignations of both East and South Regional Directors. Since the advert was issued, we have received a good level of response, which will be reviewed once the application window closes 6 May 2020.</p> <p>It is then anticipated that interviews for both roles will take place 14 May 2020 with a view to the roles commencing in September, although this may extend to Christmas dependent on the situation surrounding Covid19.</p>		
8.	<p>The next School Improvement sub committee meeting will be held on 30 June 2020</p>		