



The Merton Schools Partnership Board

30th April 2019, 8:30-10:30am

The Chaucer Centre

Minutes

Present:

Name	Role	School	Cluster
Celia Dawson (CD)	Headteacher (Co-Chair)	Cricket Green School	Mitcham Town/Special
Jane McSherry (JM)	Assistant Director for Education, Merton (Co-Chair)	London Borough of Merton	-
Kirsten Heard (KH)	Headteacher	Raynes Park High School	Secondary
David Hennessey (DH)	Headteacher	SS Peter and Paul RC Primary School	Mitcham Town /Catholic
Matt Ball (MBa)	Headteacher	Bishop Gilpin CE Primary School	Central Wimbledon
Elizabeth Fitzpatrick (EF)	Head of School Improvement, Merton	London Borough of Merton	-
Tina Harvey (TH)	Headteacher	Perseid	Special
Alison Jerrard (AJ)	Headteacher	Ricards Lodge School	Secondary
Ro Maybury (RM)	Headteacher	Abbotsbury Primary School	Morden
Anita Saville (AS)	Headteacher	Joseph Hood Primary School	West Wimbledon
Julia Waters (JW)	Headteacher	Ursuline High School	Secondary / Catholic
Jon Pepper (JP)	Partnership Coordinator	London Borough of Merton	-
Mike Ross (MR)	Chair of Governors	Raynes Park High School	Secondary/Governors
Andriana Samouel (ASam)	Headteacher	The Sherwood School	East Mitcham

Apologies:

Name	Role	School	Cluster
Jan McEwan (JMc)	Headteacher	Links Primary School	East Mitcham

Ewan Morrison (EM)	Merton School Improvement – Merton Education Partner	London Borough of Merton	-
Justin Dachtler (JD)	Headteacher	St Teresa’s RC Primary School	Catholic
Michael Bradley (MBr)	Headteacher	Merton Abbey Primary School	Central Wimbledon
Fiona Duffy (FD)	Headteacher	Dundonald Primary School	West Wimbledon
Katharine Davies (KD)	Headteacher	Poplar Primary School	Morden
Catherine Parsons (CP)	Governor	The Sherwood School	Primary Governors

(Minutes recorded by JP)

<u>Minutes</u>	<u>New Actions</u>
1. Welcome and apologies	
1.1	CD welcomed all and apologies were noted as above.
2. Minutes and matters arising from the meeting of 27th February 2019	
	The minutes were reviewed from the previous board meeting and action points discussed, as itemised below.
2.1	<i>ACTION: AS to invite governor at The Sherwood to be part of The Attain Board from the next meeting.</i> CD confirmed that Catherine Parson from The Sherwood has accepted the post as a member of The Board although send her apologies for the meeting.
2.2	<i>ACTION: Vision development to be added to the agenda at the next board meeting</i> Visioning has constituted a large portion of the agenda for the meeting.
2.3	<i>ACTION: EF and EM will speak with colleagues at LBM to ascertain whether it is necessary to involve ETeach in the creation of an NQT talent pool, to be shared with headteachers, and explore alternative options</i> EF explained that it is not strictly necessary for schools to go through Eteach, allowing schools to combine trainee details from Eteach with the details gained from the recruitment fairs.
2.4	AJ enquired whether colleagues had succeeded in recruiting any teachers through the new DfE Teaching Vacancies service, as RLHS have advertised posts through the portal.
2.5	JP reported that Attain have asked for an account but have not heard back.
2.6	JP went on to outline the details of a proposal entitled <i>Marketing for Recruitment and ITT</i> which is to be considered by board members as a possible start point for

supporting recruitment and retention through The Partnership and could be discussed at the next meeting.

ACTION: All board members are to respond to the Marketing for Recruitment and ITT document if they wish to, by 14th June.

All

2.7 MR questioned whether there has been any offer of key worker housing for teaching staff by LBM.

2.8 JM commented that there are complex considerations in this area and that specific key worker housing solely for teachers is not something that is currently possible.

ACTION: JP will arrange for banners to be printed and placed at The Civic Centre and near St. Teresa's School

2.8 JP explained that these banners were printed but have not yet been put in place in these locations due to concerns over how the other banners have become extremely dirty, along with questions over the effectiveness of the process.

ACTION: JP will meet with TH and then send out an email to cluster leads in order to find SENCOs from each cluster

2.9 Discussion over The Board approving funding for the THRIVE course followed, with TH confirming that, unfortunately, the course cannot be offered to secondary SENCOs as previously thought. This is due to the tutor who would be delivering the course.

2.10 TH stated that THRIVE could be commissioned separately in the future for secondary SENCOs.

2.11 JW asked for information about the Merton SEN review and whether the findings would be brought to headteachers and The Attain Board.

2.12 JM responded by stating that all headteachers have been invited to a meeting on 10th May where the outcomes will be presented by various Local Authority colleagues.

2.13 TH asked for a clear decision at the meeting regarding whether the THRIVE course would be funded by Attain by the end of the week.

2.14 JP clarified that there was enough interest in the 12 places but this interest was not even across clusters.

2.15 MB provided some context relating to the Central Wimbledon Cluster decision, that although schools in the cluster would like to take up the offer, there was a feeling that other clusters would benefit more from the course and that therefore the cluster decided not to put forward one of their schools

2.16 AJ spoke in support of the course, along with consideration of a secondary support programme for SENCOs being developed in the future.

2.17 AS reported that concerns at West Wimbledon Cluster revolved around not knowing how to decide which schools would take part over others.

2.18 JM proposed that if the impact is viewed as particularly high then there could be a chance to run another course again in the future alongside a secondary offer.

2.19 The proposal for Attain to fund the THRIVE course costs for 12 schools agreed by The Board.

ACTION: JP will send cluster representatives an email as a high priority asking for nominated schools to be sent through to TH by the end of the week.

JP

- 2.20 DH asked if there was a mechanism for SENCOs who do attend THRIVE to then feedback from the course. It was agreed that the SENCO Forum would be the most appropriate place for this to happen.

3. School access to The Apprenticeship Levy

- 3.1 EF reported from a meeting between JP, MR, EF and a representative from Merton HR.
- 3.2 An initial problem was that the list previously sent to schools containing courses that could be accessed through The Apprenticeship Levy included some courses that were on the Council approved list of providers and others who were not.
- 3.3 EF explained that the course providers who are yet to be approved will be added but schools will be subject to a short delay in enrolment.
- 3.4 AS described first-hand attempts to apply to a course that was not on the approved list and was refused by Merton HR.
- 3.5 JW questioned whether all schools paid into the levy pot.
- 3.6 EF replied to outline that larger VA schools will pay the levy but not to the Local Authority and is attempting to find out where the money is paid for these schools. Smaller VA schools are likely to not have paid into the levy pot as they are entities with wage bills below the required threshold.
- 3.7 AJ raised the issue of the declarations on the Local Authority application form
- 3.8 EF assured board members that the final three declaration points would be removed, by agreement of James Pierce from Merton HR.
ACTION: JP will meet with James Pierce and circulate a new list of apprenticeships which will identify the courses currently approved and those which will be subject to a delay. JP
- 3.9 JW and AJ requested that the issue was taken to Assistant Director level at the Local Authority.
ACTION: JM agreed to raise The Apprenticeship Levy at the DMT meeting. JM
- 3.10 MB asked whether the funds were currently being taken back by the Government.
- 3.11 EF responded to clarify that the funds are not currently being lost as each payment expires on a month-by-month basis.
- 3.12 JP raised the possibility of VA schools gaining access to training despite not having paid into the Local Authority levy pot.
- 3.13 EF emphasised that this option would only be something to consider if other schools had not used their funds and that equity must be maintained.
- 3.14 JW suggested that The Scrutiny Board might be a process that could look into this issue.
- 3.15 CD proposed that The Apprenticeship Levy could be a standing item on the agenda at future meetings in order to ensure schools are able to benefit appropriately.
ACTION: JP will make sure The Apprenticeship Levy is a standing agenda item at future board meetings until further notice. JP
- 3.16 JW asked whether Attain could have a strategy for Apprenticeships
- 3.17 CD and JM suggested that this could be created by a sub-group of The Board.
- 3.18 TH stated that the Attain strategy for Apprenticeships needs to sit within the Local Authority strategy
- 3.19 Discussions followed around how Attain approaches the issue more strategically.

- 3.20 CD summarised by suggesting that the next few steps should provide a suitable baseline which can lead to members of The Board to join a sub-group to lead on apprenticeships.

4. Finances

- 4.1 JP presented the annual financial report, highlighting that the partnership is ended the year in a strong financial position.
- 4.2 JP pointed out that The Board will need to anticipate approximately 45% accrual of commitments going forward as this was the proportion of committed spending that was carried forward from 2018-19 into 2019-20.
- 4.3 JP notified The Board that the Merton Finance Department had an expectation of reserves being drawn down, which did not occur in 2018-19.
- 4.4 JW queried why the Merton Finance team were putting forward these expectations
- 4.5 JM clarified that if reserves are building, it indicates that the in-year receipts are exceeding the spending.
- 4.6 JW outlined how there are reasons for the accrual, most notably the fact that The Board's activity is relatively new in its current state.
- 4.7 CD drew attention to the positive nature of having a healthy financial position.
- 4.8 MB raised the point of how there may be problems associated with The Partnership deliberating how to commit funding when schools are setting deficit budgets.
- 4.10 EF noted that there will be financial benefits of effective partnership working. JM also noted that there is collective provision through de-delegated budget for schools who may be in difficulty.
- 4.11 CD reminded the meeting that Attain is in a process of building up projects which will have a strong impact which will hopefully be seen in the near future.

5. 2019-20 CPD programme

This item was moved to the end of the agenda for the sake of timing.

- 5.1 CD asked JP for clarification on the document provided.
- 5.2 JP explained that this was a summary of the process so far and that all CPD partners are engaged in a coordinated process to send through their courses so that an 'Attain offer' can be developed as an online and print brochure during the summer.

6. Partnership vision

- 6.1 CD introduced the visioning part of the meeting, pointing out that it has been two years since The Board underwent a similar process.
- 6.2 The meeting then made an assessment of partnership strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in small groups.
- 6.3 CD asked for brief feedback regarding strengths and opportunities.

- 6.4 MR stated that strength was that the CPD offer has become well-integrated and that an opportunity would be the economies of scale that could be gained through the partnership
- 6.5 MB highlighted the commitment to collaboration and focus on the greater good was a strength and potentially a threat if new headteachers do not commit to the partnership. Collaboration around CPD in relation to the curriculum was seen as an opportunity.
- 6.6 KH identified the headteacher networks as a strength, and communication with other Local Authority departments such as SEN and HR, as an opportunity.
- 6.7 TH highlighted the belief in Merton as a strength and the diversity of the clusters' ways of working as an opportunity, but also as a potential threat due to the potential for inequity forming.
- 6.8 JW put forward the specific partnership projects and their outcomes as a strength and the potential for supporting CPD and recruitment and retention as an opportunity along with school-to-school support.
- 6.9 JM outlined that the coordinator role was seen as a strength and that forming sub-groups within The Board would represent an opportunity to move forward in the future.
- 6.10 There was some discussion around the induction of new headteachers and how the vision of Attain was communicated to them.
- 6.11 JW suggested that school governors might ask prospective headteachers about a commitment to partnership working in interviews.
- 6.12 JM noted that it is often something that candidates will raise themselves during interviews.
- 6.13 CD asked whether school governors are up to date with the work of the partnership.
- 6.14 EF confirmed that JP attended the last Chairs of Governors' Briefing and so the group are relatively aware of what The Partnership is doing.
- 6.15 DH highlighted the threat that actual or perceived inequity of projects might cause divisiveness in the future so is worth monitoring in the future.
- 6.16 AJ spoke about the way that Attain supplements and complements the targeted work of the Local Authority for specific schools.
- 6.17 JM explained how there is often a balance to be found where schools receive support through initiative delivered by other schools, who receive the funding.
- 6.18 There was some discussion relating to the national agenda around Teaching Schools and how the Attain vision responds to a changing national landscape.
- 6.19 MB proposed that board members have a short opportunity to share relevant information at the beginning of each meeting to ensure that changes are closely tracked.
- 6.20 EF agreed that this would be helpful in light of a somewhat confused and changeable education policy environment.
A further activity followed where board members responded constructively to the draft vision statement.
- 6.21 CD recognised that the phrase 'Emotionally Intelligence' might be interpreted differently by various people, suggesting 'resilient', 'honest', 'kind' and 'social responsibility' as more suitable starter words.
- 6.22 TH spoke in favour of a statement referring to 'preparing for the next stage of life'

- 6.23 Multiple board members contributed in relation to the phrase ‘excellent education’, with an overall recognition of the need to use an alternative to words such as ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’.
- 6.24 JW suggested that there should be a personal development (in relation to pupils) aspect to the vision, especially in relation to the new Ofsted framework. This was linked to the concept of preparation for the next stage of life.
- 6.25 It was agreed that the word ‘citizen’ could be problematic for some people and could perhaps be amended to reflect the ongoing development of pupils to have a social responsibility.
- 6.26 MB voiced concerns over the way that some SEND children might be seen as a financial drain on schools and the moral imperative for the partnership to resist this pattern. It was suggested that Attain could have a strong voice to advocate for such causes.
- 6.27 JM proposed that ‘trust and common purpose’ should be moved to the top of the vision statement.
- 6.28 JW put forward some re-worded statements such as ‘highest ambitions and commitment to the common good’ alongside ‘rich curriculum and memorable experience’. JW also asked that the word ‘participation’ was added to the values, and ‘interdependence’ should be changed to ‘collaboration’. The latter was agreed upon by many other board members.
- 6.29 Discussions turned to the idea of involving Local Authority youth representatives in Attain activities, with the potential to invite them to a future meeting.
- 6.30 JW mentioned the idea of Attain driving forward a ‘sustainable schools’ project, as there is a desire for change on this front in schools.
- 6.31 JM spoke in favour of including ‘positive relationships’ as a part of the vision.
- 6.32 AJ agreed with this, adding that it could include relationships beyond the school with the Local Authority.
- 6.33 AS suggested that the vision should include some reference to investing in staff and pupil wellbeing.
- 6.34 DH referenced the bullet points in the statement that related to children directly, suggesting that they should come at the top of the document.
- ACTION: JP will re-draft the vision statement using the feedback from board members provided in the meeting and send the draft to The Board for comment by May half-term. JP**
- ACTION: Review of development priorities to be added as items on the next agenda. JP**
- 6.35 CD looked ahead to the next meeting, making it clear that there should be space on the agenda for information sharing from board members.
EF asked that proposed dates and times for 2019-20 board meetings were also added to the agenda for the next meeting.
- ACTION: JP will select a set of dates and times for the board meetings in 2019-20 and add this to the agenda for the next meeting. JP**

7. DfE tailored support programme update

- 7.1 JW provided a short report as part of Item 2.9.

8. Any other business

- 8.1 MB asked that there could be a more efficient system for multiple contributions to the same document, such as G Suite.
- 8.2 Board members agreed that there was a need for this efficiency, yet there are practical difficulties with using Council systems with some packages and different schools are using different document sharing platforms.
- 8.3 CD summarised that The Board should seek to be more efficient with these processes, if possible.

The meeting concluded at 10:40am.

NEXT MEETING

10th July 2019, 9:30 - 11:30am at the Chaucer Centre

ACTION LOG

2. Minutes and matters arising from the meeting of 12th December 2018

Item	Action	Completed
2.6	All board members are to respond to the Marketing for Recruitment and ITT document if they wish to, by 14th June.	
2.19	JP will send cluster representatives an email as a high priority asking for nominated schools to be sent through to TH by the end of the week.	

3. Finances and funding

Item	Action	Completed
3.8	JP will meet with James Pierce and circulate a new list of apprenticeships which will identify the courses currently approved and those which will be subject to a delay.	
3.9	JM agreed to raise The Apprenticeship Levy at the DMT meeting on Thursday 2nd May.	
3.15	JP will make sure The Apprenticeship Levy is a standing agenda item at future board meetings until further notice.	

6. Early thinking around emerging priorities

Item	Action	Completed
6.34	JP will re-draft the vision statement using the feedback from board members provided in the meeting and send the draft to The Board for comment by May half-term.	
	Review of development priorities to be added as items on the next agenda.	
6.36	JP will select a set of dates and times for the board meetings in 2019-20 and add this to the agenda for the next meeting.	