



The Merton Schools Partnership Board

10th July 2019, 9:30-11:30am

The Chaucer Centre

Minutes

Present:

Name	Role	School/Organisation	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
Michael Bradley (MBr)	Headteacher	Merton Abbey Primary School	Central Wimbledon
Justin Dachtler (JD)	Headteacher	St Teresa's RC Primary School	Catholic
Ewan Morrison (EM)	Merton School Improvement – Merton Education Partner	London Borough of Merton	-
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	Attain	-
Mike Ross (MR)	Chair of Governors	Raynes Park High School	Secondary/Governors
Catherine Parsons (CP)	Governor	The Sherwood School	Primary Governors
Andriana Samouel (ASam)	Headteacher	The Sherwood School	East Mitcham
Katharine Davies (KD)	Headteacher	Poplar Primary School	Morden

Apologies:

Name	Role	School	Cluster
Jan McEwan (JMc)	Headteacher	Links Primary School	East Mitcham
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
Fiona Duffy (FD)	Headteacher	Dundonald Primary School	West Wimbledon

(Minutes recorded by JP)

<u>Minutes</u>	<u>New Actions</u>
1. Welcome, introductions and apologies	
1.1	JM opened the meeting by welcoming CP as a new member with those present making introductions in turn.
1.2	Apologies were noted.
2. Minutes and matters arising from the meeting of 30th April 2019	
<p>The minutes were reviewed from the previous board meeting and approved as a true record. Action points were discussed, as itemised below.</p> <p><i>ACTION: JM agreed to raise The Apprenticeship Levy at the DMT meeting on Thursday 2nd May.</i></p>	
2.1	JM made The Board aware that this issue had been raised at a DMT meeting and invite JP to discuss the process (minuted under item 8)
2.2	JP presented the budget briefly, providing further detail under line items of 'Refreshments' and 'Advances to Schools'. It was noted that the <i>Thrive for SENCos</i> course has made up a significant part of the 'Advances to Schools' for the financial year to date.
2.3	EM updated the Board on CPD programme development, presenting the new NQT+1 Programme initiative.
2.4	EF highlighted the good timing for beginning this piece of work with the Government tendering for a national provider to bid for delivery of the Early Career Framework programme.
2.5	EM clarified that the Early Career Framework will be rolled-out in 2021 with limited details available at present.
2.6	JW noted that The Partnership might be advised to develop its own programmes from a financial perspective.

- 2.7 It was explained by JP that the proposal brought to The Board came out of CPD coordination meetings but has the added benefit of positively influencing retention, if successful.
- 2.8 JP clarified that the combined costings of the courses for both secondary and primary would be a maximum of £23,410, with no intended cost for schools.
- 2.9 EM then proceeded to outline some of the structures of both programmes, with a focus in primary on teaching and learning.
- 2.10 AJ summarised that the secondary programme was designed with staff in mind and the delivery is being shared across the schools.
- 2.11 KD queried whether there should be a charge to schools due to facilitator time not being accounted for on the paper.
- 2.12 JP stated that it was assumed that there would be no cost to schools when drawing up the proposal and that a discussion on that matter may have to occur at a later date.
- 2.13 CD asked whether the numbers were based on exact numbers with EM responding to clarify that the primary course was not based on exact figures but on what has been expected based on previous years.
- 2.14 AJ stated that the secondary programme is based on the exact numbers in participating schools.
- 2.15 CD highlighted the possibility of growing the courses after the first year if they were successful.
- 2.16 In response to concerns over financial viability from KD, JW recognised that if the programme needed to be chargeable to maintain equity with the primary course, then Teach Wimbledon could set an equal charge. This was seconded by AJ.
- 2.17 JP thanked colleagues at MSTA and Teach Wimbledon for their commitment to providing equitable and accessible programmes in prior discussions and noted that the different organisational structures of the courses offer challenges to this end.
- 2.18 JD questioned whether the cost would be substantial or if a small charge per participant would truly make the course inaccessible for early career teachers.
- 2.19 JM recognised that the equal costings provided in the proposal might allow The Board to approve the proposal and then have discussions around potential charges at a later date.
- 2.20 The *Supporting Early Career Development* proposal was unanimously agreed by The Board.

3. Project updates

- 3.1 JP reviewed ongoing projects that have continued prior to the meeting, with the SEN project underway and the primary writing project nearing evaluation.
- 3.2 JD emphasised that the primary writing moderation project has been very useful.
- 3.3 JP noted that the organisation of George Hopson and Sigi Leigh from Merton School Improvement was critical to the success of the project delivery.
- 3.4 JM suggested that it would be a good opportunity to review and evaluate particular projects in the Autumn Term.
- 3.5 JP stated that there will be an annual report prepared for the October board meeting.

- 3.6 In response to JM reporting anecdotal evidence of improved recruitment and retention, AJ and JW clarified that considerable pressures remain which may not have been previously communicated.
- 3.7 JP suggested that an audit of recruitment and retention would be useful for The Partnership.
- 3.8 JW and AJ questioned the opportunities were available for key worker housing.
- 3.9 JD proposed that useful data relating to many of the projects would be beneficial for The Partnership going forward, noting that there is a strong brand across the Borough which can be developed.
- 3.10 JM recognised that there are informal subgroups coalescing around the priorities of *Coordinated CPD* and *6th Form Outcomes*, and that it would be advantageous for The Board to create further subgroups going forward.
- 3.11 JP announced that the Workload and Wellbeing Conference on 20th September is open for registration and encouraged The Board to place posters in schools and share the date with staff who may be interested.
- 3.12 AJ pointed out that the timing of the event might not be suitable for support staff and advocated for more consideration of support staff in all of The Partnership activities.

4. Attain vision and values (for board approval and agreement for roll-out)

- 4.1 EF summarised the process of developing the vision and values to date.
- 4.2 JP suggested that there could be a poster with the vision and values clearly stated in every Attain school, reinforcing The Partnership brand and raising staff awareness of the intentions behind its statements.
- 4.3 JP thanked The Board for their contributions and stated pride in being associated with the words expressed in the vision and values document.
- 4.4 The vision and values document and roll-out as outlined above was unanimously agreed by The Board.
- ACTION: JP to visit all clusters to share the vision before the next meeting of The Attain Board** JP
- ACTION: JP to design a poster for dissemination throughout Attain schools as soon as possible** JP

5. Partnership priorities review

Recruitment and Retention

- 5.1.1 JM summarised the work that had been completed under this priority so far.
- 5.1.2 CD supported the priority continuing for another year.
- 5.1.3 AJ asked whether the intended outcome could be changed to include 'the school workforce', not just 'teachers', agreed by the meeting.
- 5.1.4 JW reinforced the need for support staff in health and safety and financial management to be developed more due to emerging pressures.
- 5.1.5 TH expressed that there is a lot of demand for supporting teaching assistants in the classroom, with KD highlighting the courses on offer from MSTA to meet this need.

- 5.1.6 CD shared discussions from the Mitcham Town Cluster around developing learning support in the classroom.
- 5.1.7 TH summarised the MSTA cross-phase courses that could be of interest in order to develop teaching assistants.
- 5.1.8 JM invited interest in being part of the subgroup for the priority of recruitment and retention.

Co-ordinated CPD

- 5.2.1 EM suggested that this would continue as a key priority
- 5.2.2 EF requested whether there could be a sharpened planning cycle provided to The Board in order to allow all partners to understand what is necessary at different times of the year.
- 5.2.3 JP confirmed that there would be an annual cycle document prepared for the next board meeting to clarify these steps further.

ACTION: JP to develop an annual cycle planning document with each priority shown clearly.

JP

- 5.2.4 EM noted that the existing subgroup consists of EM, JP, and a representative from Teach Wimbledon, MSTA and from each of the CPD providers based at LBM.

Leadership Development

- 5.3.1 EM and EF spoke in favour of keeping this as a strategic priority, with the importance of developing leaders in schools a cornerstone of overall school effectiveness.
- 5.3.2 JW linked the development of leadership and recruitment and retention, highlighting the challenges of recruiting middle leaders in particular.
- 5.3.3 EF added that financial constraints have meant that more costly leadership positions are sometimes areas where budgets are being tightened. This point was agreed by JW who predicted that there would be fewer leaders in schools based on current projections.
- 5.3.4 KH reported that there seems to be a lack of leaders in the system and that often it is a question of leaders not applying for vacancies.
- 5.3.5 MR proposed that leadership development and recruitment and retention subgroups could have crossover in their working due to the interconnectedness of the issues.
- 5.3.6 JP supported the notion that the priorities were highly interconnected, reporting that meetings with clusters often lead to an understanding that *Recruitment and Retention* and *Financial Stability* were crucial to the realisation of other priorities.

Financial Stability

- 5.4.1 JM reported that there were two Merton schools who have set a deficit budget are working with the Department for Education to learn lessons from their advisors.
- 5.4.2 AJ noted that there was a headteacher march on Downing Street. JW agreed to circulate details to JP.
- 5.4.3 JD shared that the challenges around budgeting often arise due to a lack of information provided about future funding, in particular relating to grants.
- 5.4.4 JW asked how many schools had submitted breakeven budgets for 2021.

- 5.4.5 JM responded that LBM was not in a position to share such information, but accepted that three-year forecasts are very difficult and often result in underspend on deficit budgets.
- 5.4.6 EF highlighted the variance between schools relating to budgeting.
- 5.4.7 MBr reminded The Board that there was a process last year where Marius Karsten collated information around changing of staff structures.
- 5.4.8 EF also suggested that the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education benefited from a presentation around financial management that has been gratefully received, suggesting that this might form an event in the future or that Attain might organise for the same advisors to present to headteachers.
- 5.4.9 JP advised The Board that clusters' opinions regarding financial stability consistently raises the fees of supply teaching agencies as an area where money could be saved.
- 5.5.1 JM suggested that solutions to this problem could form a central part of the work of the subgroup for financial stability, which will remain as a priority.

Sixth Form Outcomes

- 5.6.1 AJ reported that colleagues had enjoyed the development opportunities provided by the project in the present academic year.
- 5.6.2 KH highlighted that there is a need for more examiners in school, whereas JW reported that there are many in UHS.
- 5.6.3 It was agreed that Sixth Form Outcomes would continue as a priority, with JM outlining that an informal subgroup already consists of JP, Paul McGivern and Steve Williams.

Primary Writing

- 5.7.1 AS expressed how the work around primary writing certainly had positively impacted the moderation process in West Wimbledon Cluster.
- 5.7.2 Referring to very early primary outcomes, EF reported that there is a similar picture to 2018-19, possibly with small improvements likely to come through once the results are finalised. Writing remains as an area of relative weakness in the primary phase and EF supported a continuation of the strategic focus.
- 5.7.3 EF also highlighted that the new Ofsted framework where achievement of at least age-related expectations in reading represents quite an uncompromising statement which might mean that reading is worth considering as an interim primary priority.
- 5.7.4 JD voiced concerns over this perspective, instead linking both writing and reading as being related in importance.
- 5.7.5 JM proposed that the priority would be changed to 'Primary Literacy' to encompass reading as well as writing.

Pupils in Receipt of SEND Support

- 5.8.1 There was broad support for maintaining this priority into the next academic year.
- 5.8.2 JW asked what the expected outcomes for the priority as it stands.
- 5.8.3 EF outlined that outcome relate to improved academic performance and improved identification of SEND needs.
- 5.8.4 There was discussion relating to provision for pupils who might not be accessing the curriculum in-school for specific reasons.

- 5.8.5 It was agreed that the priority would be changed to 'SEND and Vulnerable Groups' and that the outcome would encompass primary and secondary phases.
- 5.8.6 JW expressed concerns over cross-Borough working, especially with respect to the medical services provided through CCGs and how organisational structures sometime complicate educational support.
- 5.9 JM summarised the subgroups that would be formed to direct work under each agreed priority. It was agreed that recruitment and retention would be combined with leadership development. The subgroups volunteers were noted as follows:

Recruitment, Retention and Leadership Development

JP, AS, EM, TH (or CD), and AJ (or JW)

SEND and Vulnerable Groups

JP, RM, KH, TH (or CD) and Nick Flesher (tbc)

Primary Literacy

JP, EF, ASam and MBr

Financial Stability

JP, MR

Coordinated CPD

JP, EM, TH (or CD), and AJ (or JW)

Sixth Form Outcomes

JP, Paul McGivern and Steve Williams

ACTION: JP to contact each subgroup to arrange an initial meeting to steer each priority before the end of term

JP

It was agreed by The Board upon the suggestion of MR that the subgroups would be self-directing but would report to each Board Meeting with a list of actions undertaken and plans going forward.

6. Project ideas for 2019-20

- Raising Standards in the Sixth Form*
- 6.1.1 JP invited board members to consider the initial plans referenced in the proposal presented.
- 6.1.2 EF highlighted that the funding required would represent the rest of The Partnership in-year budget.
- 6.1.3 JW asked if the underspend from the 2018-19 project could be calculated in order to be spent on the programme for the coming year.

ACTION: JP will investigate the underspend from the 2018-19 *Raising Standards in the Sixth Form* and report to The Board as soon as possible.

JP

6.1.5 JP and EF emphasised that an early decision would be beneficial in order to move the project forward in a timely manner.

6.1.6 Clarification was requested by secondary headteachers around whether The Prince's Teaching Institute (PTI) unlimited option is workable.

ACTION: JP will send details of PTI Unlimited to secondary headteachers and seek responses before the end of term.

JP

6.1.7 Options 1-5 on the *Raising Standards in the Sixth Form* proposal were agreed by The Board unanimously, with the in-principle decision on the inclusion of PTI Unlimited to be confirmed via email following headteachers' responses.

RSE and Health Education

6.2.1 JP shared the survey results relating to schools' preparation for statutory guidance in RSE and Health Education which Kate Jennings from LBM worked on. Board members were invited to take the paper away for further consideration.

7. Operational planning 2019-20

7.1 Board members changes were confirmed for the academic year 2019-20, as follows:

- Izzy Rickards (Holy Trinity) to replace Matt Ball in the Central Wimbledon Cluster.
- Gary Quinn (St Matthew's) to replace Fiona Duffy in the West Wimbledon Cluster.
- Peta Blow (Morden Primary) to replace Katharine Davies in the Morden Cluster.
- Janine Kenna (St. John Fisher) and David Feasey (St. Thomas of Canterbury) to jointly replace Justin Dachtler in the Catholic Cluster in a shared role.
- Phyllis Sternberg (Beecholme) to replace Jan McKewen in the East Mitcham Cluster

7.2 CD was appointed as the Co-Chair of The Board for 2019-20.

8. Standing items

Merton schools' use of The Apprenticeship Levy

8.1 JP outlined that the process of tendering for leadership courses accessible through The Apprenticeship Levy had been reached in collaboration with James Pierce from Merton HR, following the drawing up of specifications for relevant courses. The process is soon to end and then contracts will be finalised by the end of July.

8.2 MR voiced concern over whether the end of July timing will be good enough for courses with a September start and expressed disappointment in the process as a whole.

8.3 KH mentioned that there are other start dates for the courses, meaning that many may have to apply for January start dates.

- 8.4 AS welcomed the efforts of JP but also voiced frustration that the piece of work should have been completed two years ago by LBM, noting the negative effects of this delay on recruitment and retention of staff.
- 8.5 JM accepted that there has been a difficult process and assured the meeting that JP would make sure that new developments are shared in a timely fashion.
- 8.6 MR recognised that EF and JP put James Pierce under pressure at a previous meeting, yet voiced further concerns about how effective it was due to small-mindedness in LBM HR.
- 8.7 AJ asked if the process would take the same amount of time if there other courses available in the future.
- 8.8 JP confirmed that provider would have to apply through a tendering process although hoped the timeframe would be reduced due to knowledge gained over the past few months.
- 8.9 EF suggested that LBM HR could be asked for a full explanation of what has happened in this situation.
- 8.10 JW asked which schools The Apprenticeship Levy applied to in Merton.
- 8.11 JP and EF clarified that most small VA schools are not levy-payers and therefore cannot draw on the funds. It was thought that larger VA schools pay into a separate digital account and can access courses through the Department for Education.
- ACTION: JP will find a list of schools that can access The Apprenticeship Levy funding through Merton.** JP

9. Any other business

- 9.1 EF reported from the meeting of London Education Partnerships, and gained Board approval for the development of a glossy brochure to advocate for the benefits of school partnerships as a legitimate structure.
- 9.2 CD reported from the Mitcham Town Cluster that higher-ability Pupil Premium students were a concern that the cluster wanted to share, alongside E-safety.
- ACTION: JP will add 'Feedback from clusters' as a standing item in future meetings.** JP
- 9.3 RM reported from the Morden Cluster that support for foundation subjects in primary was viewed as a priority.
- 9.4 EF shared that there were plans to work on this with MSTA, Teach Wimbledon and MSI all in discussions.
- 9.5 JM made clear that despite not being an official priority, needs around foundation primary subjects existed alongside the need for a more broad preparation for the new Ofsted framework

MEETING DATES FOR 2019-20 (all to be held at The Chaucer Centre)

Wednesday 30th October	8:30-10:30am
Tuesday 3rd December	8:30-10:30am
Tuesday 25th February	8:30-10:30am
Tuesday 5th May	8:30-10:30am
Tuesday 7th July	8:30-10:30am

ACTION LOG

4. Attain vision and values (for board approval and agreement for roll-out)

Item	Action	Completed
4.4	JP to visit all clusters to share the vision before the next meeting of The Attain Board	
	JP to design a poster for dissemination throughout Attain schools as soon as possible	

5. Partnership priorities review

Item	Action	Completed
5.2.3	JP to develop an annual cycle planning document with each priority shown clearly	
5.8	JP to contact each subgroup to arrange an initial meeting to steer each priority before the end of term	

6. Project ideas for 2019-20

Item	Action	Completed
6.1.3	JP will investigate the underspend from the 2018-19 Raising Standards in the Sixth Form and report to The Board as soon as possible.	
6.1.6	JP will send details of PTI Unlimited to secondary headteachers and seek responses before the end of term.	

8. Standing items

Item	Action	Completed
8.11	JP will find a list of schools that can access The Apprenticeship Levy funding through Merton.	

9. Standing items

Item	Action	Completed
9.2	JP will add 'Feedback from clusters' as a standing item in future meetings.	