

## MINUTES OF THE ARC MEETING - PART 1

<b>Date</b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup> October 2017 @ 09:30</b>	
<b>Venue</b>	<b>Castle Hill Primary School</b>	
<b>Present:</b>	Richard Tyndall (RT) Heidi Hoskin (HH) Linda Bamford (LB) Cassandra Williams (CW) Alex Dyne (AD) Nadia Bosse (NB) Fiona Pierson (FP) Mike Wilson (MW) Gemma Andrews (GA)	Chair Director of Primary Education Director of Secondary Education Regional Executive Principal Regional Business Manager Principal, Cliff Lane Primary – item 7.1 only Principal, Colchester Academy – item 7.2 only Principal, Alde Valley Academy – item 7.3 only Principal, Castle Hill Primary – item 7.4 only
<b>Apologies:</b>	David Hare	Trust Board Member
<b>Absent:</b>		
<b>In attendance:</b>	Jane March (JM)	Note Taker

The meeting met its quorum

<b>AGENDA</b>	<b>Welcome and Apologies for Absence</b>
<b>ITEM 1</b>	
<b>Discussion</b>	<p>The meeting commenced at 09:43.</p> <p><b>AGREED: RT the NLG supporting the East ARC took the chair in the pre-notified absence of David Hare.</b></p> <p>All attendees introduced themselves providing relevant background resume.</p> <p>Members received and discussed documents relevant to remit, which had all been circulated in advance.</p> <p><b>Questions and discussions:</b></p> <p><b>Q (Chair) Are there any questions concerning the Skills Audit Analysis report?</b></p> <p>There were no questions from members.</p> <p>Members noted that this analysis report evidences committee competency in all essential and desirable elements relevant to the National Association of Governors skills assessment framework.</p> <p><b>Q (Chair) Are there any questions concerning the Code of conduct?</b></p> <p>There were no questions from members.</p> <p><b>Q (Chair) Would it be preferable to engage an independent clerk for ARCs - to ensure best practice appropriate committee support in line with the new DfE Clerking Competency Framework?</b></p> <p>Following discussion, it was</p> <p><b>AGREED: that the question of potential benefit of professional clerking service support for ARCs – is to be considered further off-line through the services of the Trusts’ Executive Manager.</b></p>

<b>DECISION:</b>	Following discussion, it was – <b>AGREED: That the Bright Tribe Trust &amp; Adventure Learning Academy Trust Scheme of Delegation for Governance function including ARC Terms of Reference and membership details is noted.</b>
<b>ACTIONS:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CW to complete Skills Audit and return to JD by 31 October 2017.</li> <li>• Trusts' Executive Manager to be tasked to review the potential benefit of professional clerking service support for ARCs – and to take appropriate action to support effective admin and clerking for ARCs.</li> </ul>
<b>AGENDA ITEM 2</b>	<b>ARC Vacancies and appointments and structure</b>
<b>Discussion</b>	<p><b>Q (Chair) Is the current ARC membership appropriate to discharge remit?</b></p> <p>Discussions included questions concerning –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The role of Executive Directors (members or attendees?)</li> <li>The balance of employee / non-employee members</li> <li>Potential inclusion of Drive Team Chairs in ARC meetings.</li> <li>The importance of focus on collective, regional membership for ARCs through inclusion of members who have a regional remit / oversight and ambition.</li> </ul> <p>No further queries were raised.</p> <p>Members acknowledged the key function of the ARC is to provide opportunity for face to face discussion with REPs and with each individual Academy Principal to provide challenge and support to hold them to account for their decisions as Trust leaders.</p> <p>Members acknowledged that the ARC is intended to provide essential quality assurance on process and decisions to support discharge of the governance function and to support effective communications across the governance structure - to and from Board, ARCs and Drive Teams.</p>
<b>DECISION:</b>	Following discussion, it was – <b>AGREED: that a review of ARC membership should be undertaken to ensure that the majority of members have a regional remit and ambition.</b>
<b>Action</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trusts' Executive Manager to be tasked to establish a task and finish group to further review ARC membership to ensure a majority of members who have a regional remit and ambition.</li> </ul>
<b>AGENDA ITEM 3</b>	<b>Declaration of Business &amp; Pecuniary Interest</b>
<b>Discussion</b>	<p>No declarations of potential conflicts were raised relative to declared agenda items at this meeting.</p> <p>Members were advised that the ARC Register of Business and Pecuniary Interests was currently being compiled.</p>
<b>Action</b>	<b>Trusts' Executive Manager to be tasked to ensure completion of the East ARC's Register of Business and Pecuniary Interests for appropriate publication and for presentation review at the next ARC</b>
<b>AGENDA ITEM 4</b>	<b>Minutes of previous ARC meeting</b>
<b>Discussion</b>	<p>Members reviewed Academy-specific minutes from the previous ARC meeting.</p> <p>There were no questions.</p> <p><b>AGREED: Minutes from the ARC meeting are confirmed as a correct record of business.</b></p>
<b>Action</b>	None required.
<b>AGENDA ITEM 5</b>	<b>Actions and impact from actions</b>
<b>Discussion</b>	Members noted that there were no outstanding actions or other matters arising from previous meetings.
<b>Action</b>	None required.

AGENDA ITEM 6	REP Report
Discussion	<p>Members confirmed their prior review of the East REP's Report, Autumn Term 2017.</p> <p>The Chair asked the East REP to provide a one-minute regional headlines summary. The REP provided the following summary points –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The recent publication of a very positive AVA Ofsted Report.</li> <li>• Importance of focus on middle leadership across the region.</li> <li>• Importance of focus on support for senior leadership – the majority of whom have been in post for less than 18 months – with many significantly newer.</li> <li>• Attendance has improved across all schools - but requires continued focus.</li> <li>• Safeguarding has improved significantly across all schools - but requires continued focus.</li> <li>• Secondary outcomes are above national – based on currently available national data. National data comparators for Primary are not available until mid-October.</li> <li>• The decision to base Business Manager on site in schools – is starting to impact on improved finance communications</li> <li>• The challenge of ensuring delivery of appropriate REP support to inexperienced Principals alongside quality assurance and accountability remit.</li> <li>• The challenge of brokering school to school support across a large region</li> </ul> <p><b>Q What are the regional priorities for schools?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finance - Ensure budget planning provides the information schools need early enough to support staffing and curriculum planning and ensuring that Principals understand budget mechanisms and financial support available to schools.</li> <li>• Staff recruitment and retention – significant recruitment issues have impacted across the region</li> </ul> <p>Members acknowledged a regional and national priority for the Trust around reputation.</p> <p><b>Q What can be done at local and regional level to address this?</b></p> <p>REPs can identify relevant ways to communicate to community wider than the individual school as well as supporting communications at individual school level. Trust support is available – including through Livewire PR commissioned services.</p> <p><b>AGREED: A focus on positive messages to younger staff including to confirm the Trust 'offer' to staff. Maybe REPs and other Trust leaders could produce some articles for Newsletters.</b></p> <p><b>Members acknowledged that changing community perceptions can take time and time and potentially significant investment of resources.</b></p> <p><b>Q What is holding back school improvement – what would you change?</b></p> <p>The REP replied that there is lots to be done, not just one thing – each school is on an individual journey with its own specific needs. CW stated that last year we couldn't recruit.</p> <p><b>Q Given that individual school matters will be discussed separately at the ARC and by individual Drive Teams – are there any key themes across the East Region Hub for ARC consideration?</b></p> <p>The REP reported that there have been problems with recruitment across the area.</p> <p>Lack of experience in leadership teams is a common concern, particularly middle leadership.</p> <p><b>Q Is finance a common concern? Are resources in the right place?</b></p> <p>The REP reported that she believed that it was taking too long to get answers in relation to budgets and that deadlines were being missed due to no financial information. Executive leaders discussed the role of the REP in supporting schools to ensure that the right resources are in place.</p> <p>The REP commented that a new Trust project for new/middle leadership will help provide knowledge and skills on Trust finances. A joint project has been established to provide moderation support across the Trust Hub – this will help to bring middle leaders together. A prior moderation programme had been unsuccessful but new leaders are now in place and there is genuine interest in across-hub working.</p> <p><b>Q What is being done to support the Principals to work together as a supportive hub – particularly given the distance between academies?</b></p> <p>The REP mentioned supportive partnerships in EYFS as an example of best practice in across-hub working.</p> <p><b>Q What are you doing as REP to pull schools together across the regional hub?</b></p>

As REP I have -

- promoted a proposal for joint moderation through school to school support and set up the timetable for moderation activities.
- set up Principal Peer Support arrangements to address specific activities.
- set up folders to capture Principal development activities.
- To date a significant proportion of REP time has been used to provide personal support to new Principals and schools in challenging circumstances. For example, it took three attempts to recruit a Principal at Castle Hill until the current Principal was appointed – significant support was needed to Castle Hill during this period.

**The Chair encouraged the REP to generalise accurately from personal experience. What is your thinking? What are you bringing to these schools that they wouldn't get on their own?**

- A focus on training at Castle Hill with the establishment of a new training room. Early education training will be offered from Castle Hill including to other schools.
- Work with ambition leadership schools – to develop middle leadership support. Seeking Principal's voice in developing bespoke programmes – relevant to specific needs.
- A number of schools have needed significant REP support due to specific current challenges including inexperienced Principals / other Leaders. This has added to usual activities of monitoring and follow-up and quality assuring Principal's decision making – to include provision of mentoring support and process guidance for inexperienced Principals – ensuring quality of service through provision of appropriate support.

The Dir Secondary and Dir Primary acknowledged the workload pressures relative to the provision of support and guidance to newly appointed Principals alongside the key remit for quality assurance and delivery of regional challenge to hold Principals to account and discussed appropriate Trust support activities.

- Ensuring schools are 'Ofsted-ready' has been a focus of recent REP activities – working with Principals to understand their strengths and challenges relative to inspection process

Members discussed potential areas for future focus - including Primary and Secondary information and best practice sharing – relative to – for example - strategies for managing behaviour, assessment, pupil premium support and for teaching and learning subject specialisms e.g. Handwriting.

Members encouraged the REP to provide input for future ARCs to include thoughts on strategic regional matters, including proposals and recommendations for development.

*The REP was thanked for her input to this section of the ARC meeting.*

#### **QUESTIONS TO THE RBM**

**Q (To the RBM) Why aren't primary Principals clear on their budgets?**

The RBM confirmed that the role of business manager had not previously supported schools adequately. The revised support arrangements including the appointment of on-site business managers reflect 'lessons learned' and should improve financial and other support. Members noted that a business manager has recently been based at Castle Hill.

**Q (to the RBM) Can you please identify two key lessons that had been learned?**

Primaries had experienced significant problems with the previous ordering process – including time taken to approve and turn around orders – this resulted in some by-passing of formal systems impacting on budget monitoring. The new system ensures that orders cannot be placed without purchase order and the BM has authority to sign off routine orders which significantly speeds up the process.

To ensure regular sharing of financial information - newly agreed arrangements provide for business managers have scheduled monthly meetings with Principals.

**Q Will these arrangements support improvement in recruitment process?**

The REP reported that it takes too long to find out if budget is available to address staffing needs.

The RBM advised that the process for recruitment requisition for 'like-for-like' replacement staff is straightforward and that approval authorisation for these positions rests with the Principal and the Business Manager.

The RBM has delegated authority to approve new posts – although the associated HR process was currently being finalised – following requisition by a REP.

The REP expressed concern regarding removal of headteacher responsibility and accountability for staffing decisions.

The Dir Secondary drew attention to the Scheme of Financial Delegations which provides process including checks and balances to ensure that budget impact is fully considered as part of staffing decision-making. The RBM spoke of similar need to ensure prior consideration of financial position relative to the engagement of agency staff given that agency costs could quickly and significantly impact on budget plans. All agreed the

	<p>importance of rapid response to changing academy requirements – particularly relative to staffing – noting that the new business support arrangements intended to provide accurate and up to date financial information to support Principal’s staffing considerations in a timely manner. The process for involvement of the REP and the RBM in approving the creation of additional posts and or supporting additional agency costs will enable appropriate professional input to inform appropriate professional decision making. The RBM confirmed that the finance function is to support and inform decision making not to judge appropriate allocation of available finance – which is clearly a matter for education professionals.</p> <p>Discussions also covered the importance of early involvement of Principals in individual academy budget planning and of the need for further consideration of contingency funds – maybe at REP level</p> <p><b>Q Are monthly meetings with REPs also scheduled in?</b></p> <p>The RBM advised arrangements - that Business Managers will feed back to the RBM who will meet with the REP to give a regional presentation including budget forecasts together with regional overview and significant academy specific matters.</p> <p><b>In summarising, the Chair commented on the importance of understanding an organisation’s current position concerning ‘risk tolerance’ – noting that the Trusts current arrangements provided authority for a REP to take ‘risk’ subject to the identified accountability framework.</b></p> <p><b>AGREED: Messages to Trust Board –</b></p> <p><b>to ensure Board awareness of ongoing difficulties around recruitment and retention;</b></p> <p><b>to confirm the importance of in-built flexibility, contingency and appropriate guidance on Trust ‘risk-tolerance’ relative to REP decisions making – within the overall framework of trust accountabilities.</b></p> <p><b>Q Are there any other matters for discussion with the RBM?</b></p> <p>The RBM commented that the integrated BMs into schools is intended to significantly support Principal’s understanding of academy financial information and enable informed decision making at academy level. RBMs will have a more strategic role including supporting business development planning.</p> <p><b>Q Are there any other matters for discussion with Regional staff?</b></p> <p>No further matters were raised.</p> <p>The REP was thanked for her informative reporting and contributions to the ARC process</p> <p>The Chair acknowledged progress evidenced in ARC reports.</p> <p>Members noted headline issues around fragility due to newness of a number of individuals and teams at middle and senior levels across the region – acknowledging evidence that relevant risks are identified and appropriately mitigated.</p> <p>Data evidences progress across academies in the region relative to attendance and to relevant to the application of common trust processes and systems.</p> <p>The REP referred to difficulties in recruiting quality staff to Castle Hill and urged focus on a Trust recruitment strategy – including clear articulation of the BTT staff ‘offer’. Members discussed the importance of the trust creating ‘the right conditions for the senior management to make the right decisions to get best staff in challenging schools’.</p> <p>Members discussed the importance of clarity of ARC remit.</p> <p><b>AGREED: The REP to seek feedback from Principals concerning their views on how the ARC process could best support their activities.</b></p> <p>There were no further questions concerning the REP’s report.</p>
<p><b>Action</b></p>	<p><b>Message to Trust Board –</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>to ensure Board awareness of ongoing difficulties around recruitment and retention;</b></li> <li>• <b>to confirm the importance of in-built flexibility, contingency and appropriate guidance on Trust ‘risk-tolerance’ relative to REP decisions making – within the overall framework of trust accountabilities.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>The REP to seek feedback from Principals concerning their views on how the ARC process could best support their activities.</b></p>
<p><b>AGENDA ITEM 7</b></p>	<p><b>Individual School Reports</b></p>

## 7.1 Cliff Lane Academy Discussion

### CLIFF LANE

Nadia Bosse, Principal, joined the meeting.

The Chair welcomed NB to the meeting and led introductions.

The Chair confirmed the Principal's understanding of the purpose of the meeting and the role of the ARC within the Trusts Scheme of governance.

**Q** What are the messages that the ARC needs to hear based on your personal experiences?

Principal and REP responses –

- Teaching staff have been redeployed to better meet the needs of the children.
- Significant work has been done across all areas now.
- Safeguarding is compliant and further improving following identified focus.
- The SEF is graded Good in all areas.
- Phonics in EYFS is an area of concern.

**Q** Is grade 2 'Good' self-evaluation appropriate given that last year's results were below national?

The REP responded that current pupil progress is moderated as at least good in all areas.

The Dir Primary provided challenge concerning evidencing the judgement linked to outcomes and to the quality of teaching over time and progress measures for 16/17 KS1 & 2 given that these were low compared to the national picture. Headlines figures would inevitably present a line of enquiry for an Ofsted Inspector.

The Principal advised that poor assessment – including inaccurate baselining had contributed to lower pupil outcomes and that as a result, the school had recently re-track progress for each year group back to Reception as data from the previous tracking process had been judged to be unreliable. Reading writing and maths assessments had been moderated to validate teacher assessments and projections are now judged as solid.

Following discussion, it was -

**AGREED: The Principal is asked to review the SEF grade for outcomes against the descriptors in the OFSTED handbook and to feedback to the Director of Primary during the November school monitoring visit.**

**Q** What actions has been taken to improve phonics?

The Principal advised that investigation had determined that staff had been taken Read, Write, Inc. metrics too literally and children were not being moved on quickly enough. Phonics teaching was overhauled. Moderated assessments evidenced impact through rapid pupil progress with every child except 1 making progress and the 16 children identified as cause for concern reducing to 5.

### Reading

The Principal advised that moderated EYFS scores assessed 66% of pupils already at pass rate and projected final outcomes in excess of 72% of pupils achieving pass rate at the end of the year in reading. are moderated. Should get 72% pass rate this year in reading.

Members noted that the Dir Primary would review evidence underpinning this repotting during her November visit to the school.

**Q** How confident are you that quality of teaching judgements are accurate?

These will be moderated again through use of an external consultant.

**Q** Are staffing arrangements now strong or are their areas of fragility?

The Principal responded that there are areas of fragility – for example - the year 1 teacher is scheduled to take Maternity Leave.

Members acknowledged evidence of a solid staffing structure providing clear profiles for new staff.

**Q** Is significant REP support still being delivered to Cliff Lane?

The REP reported that the school has significantly improved following the new Principal's appointment and that processes and procedures are in place and working well. The current focus of REP activity is to support middle leader development and to ensure that the school is 'Ofsted-ready'.

The REP reported significant turn-around in school improvement during the short tenure of the current Principal supporting significantly improved life chances for pupils into the future.

**Q** What is on your current 'to do' list for the school of regional significance?

Primarily to continue to work to ensure stable staffing and on embedding current school systems.

**Q What externally facing activity is being conducted?**

The Principal reported

- good links have been made with local High Schools
- a focus on send good news stories to press
- A planned visit from the Mayor on November 9<sup>th</sup>

**Q Are there any Estates issues?**

The REP and Principal confirmed that the school estate has been transformed by the Trust.

**Q Is consideration being given to possible future building developments in light of the potential impact of increased pupil number projections?**

Following discussion, it was

**AGREED: that –**

**The question of potential future building development to accommodate projected increased pupil numbers is referred to the Trust Estates Team.**

**The RBM is asked to provide headline summary figures regarding estates spending as part of future ARC reporting.**

**The Executive Manager to be tasked to include T&CG headlines as part of future ARC reporting.**

**Q Has this message of Trust support been communicated to stakeholders including parents, staff and community to support an improved Trust reputation?**

The Principal acknowledged the need for continued focus on addressing Trust reputation in the broader school community. Members acknowledged that turning around community perception will inevitably take time and thought.

**Q What is the Trust doing to help to build strong reputation impacting in the school community?**

The trust provides marketing and communication support to its schools. This works best as a partnership – schools need to input ideas about appropriate ways of communicating with their wider community based on local knowledge and experience.

Following discussion, it was

**AGREED: that further thought should be given to -**

- **Potential for inclusion of articles from REPs / Directors / Trustees in school newsletters.**
- **A focus on messaging aimed at younger staff concerning opportunities within the broader Trusts.**

**Q What are the key issues with pupil attendance?**

The Principal reported a small number of children with significant attendance concerns and Local Authority reluctance to take court action for non-attendance. Members noted report of significant negative impact relative to in-year admissions reporting that there had been 19 in-year admissions during Sept – Dec 2016 8 of whom had prior attendance issues and that the school is prepared to robustly challenge in-year fair access requests. Members welcomed report that the Trust has provided support from specialist advisers on school attendance and legal professionals.

Following discussion, it was -

**AGREED: that attendance data is to be additionally profiled by the school to remove all extreme cases to establish an alternative metric concerning attendance of pupils without specific issues.**

**Q What is the position with the Cliff Lane Drive Team?**

The Principal reported that the Drive Team is fully operational and very keen to make an impact– having met both informally and formally and evidencing very competent appointees.

**Q What are the next steps to support Drive Team development?**

Members noted that Drive Team members have received group training regarding safeguarding, exclusions and in relation to general governance remit and have access to Modern Governor on-line governor training and that the Principal is able to support / procure development activities for individual member / Drive Team Development.

	<p><b>Q As a newly appointed Principal – where are you on your journey?</b></p> <p>The Principal reported herself to be in ‘embedding and sustaining’ phase.</p> <p><b>Q Does more need to be done to ensure that good appointees flourish and stay?</b></p> <p>Strong support from REP and direct access as needed to Trust specialist officers.</p> <p><i>Cliff Lane meeting ended.</i></p>
<p><b>Actions</b></p>	<p><b>Cliff Lane:</b></p> <p><b>The Principal is asked to review the SEF grade for outcomes against the descriptors in the OFSTED handbook and to feedback to the Director of Primary during the November school monitoring visit.</b></p> <p><b>The Trust Estates Team is asked to review potential need and options for potential future building development to accommodate projected increased pupil numbers at Cliff Lane.</b></p> <p><b>The RBM is asked to provide headline summary figures regarding estates spending as part of future ARC reporting.</b></p> <p><b>The Executive Manager to be tasked to include T&amp;CG headlines as part of future ARC reporting.</b></p> <p><b>The Executive Leadership Team to be tasked to review -</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Potential for inclusion of articles from REPs / Directors / Trustees in school newsletters.</b></li> <li>• <b>A focus on messaging aimed at younger staff concerning opportunities within the broader Trusts.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>The Cliff Lane Principal is asked to produce an additional profile of attendance data excluding all extreme cases - to establish an alternative metric concerning attendance of pupils without specific issues.</b></p>
<p><b>7.2 Colchester Academy Discussion</b></p>	<p><b>COLCHESTER ACADEMY</b></p> <p>Fiona Pierson, Principal, joined the meeting.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed FP to the meeting and led introductions. The Chair confirmed the Principal’s understanding of the purpose of the meeting and the role of the ARC within the Trusts Scheme of governance.</p> <p>In her introductory statement, the REP advised that she had been supporting Colchester Academy for a short period only and was personally confident of a SEF judgement at grade 2 – Good.</p> <p>The Principal advised that she had been in role for 2.5 years with prior Ofsted Grading at Grade 3 – RI.</p> <p><b>Q What are the messages that the ARC and Trust Board needs to hear from Colchester Academy based on your personal experiences?</b></p> <p>Principal and REP responses –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the reputation of the Trust within the school is not positive. There is a ‘them and us’ attitude. It limits the progress that can be made. There is a core group of people who could pollute new staff with negativity. Staff have seen lots of changes.</li> </ul> <p><b>Q What can we put in place to change mindsets?</b></p> <p>The Principal spoke of a need for better communications – clearer and timely – regarding Trust actions, decisions and changes.</p> <p><b>Q What are the challenges impacting on the achievement of students.</b></p> <p>The Principal reported –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 52% of pupils meet disadvantaged criteria.</li> <li>• Summer 2017 outcomes evidenced improvement and an upward trend since last year. Although, of course, there is uncertainty regarding comparative E&amp;M position due to lack of benchmarking comparators.</li> <li>• New specifications for E&amp;M presented challenge.</li> <li>• New exam grading structure of 1-9 presents challenge</li> <li>• Quality of teaching and learning in English is the best it has ever been.</li> <li>• Results were better than predicted – evidencing solid assessment and tracking.</li> </ul>

- The decision to enter 90 Year 10 pupils for English has significantly reduced examination pressure for this cohort in Y11 - 33% of Y10 entries secured grade 5, and 58% secured grade 4.
- Significant focus on the challenge to increase pupil numbers.

**Q What is the challenge with pupil numbers at CA?**

The Principal reported that other schools locally have been allowed by the LA to expand and that historically Colchester Academy was not a school of first choice for many in the local community.

Members welcomed report of significant impact of initiatives over recent years to improve reputation and encourage admissions – leading to an increase of 105 in Year 7 admissions to 158 September 2017 admissions 140 of whom were first choice admissions.

**Q Does the school need additional support from the Trust to support admissions marketing / reputational improvement?**

Additional financial support would enable expansion of current initiatives for primary networking and transition initiatives. Creative proposals for use for school space for secondary age-appropriate activities would be welcome. The agreement to let out space to support the establishment of a private nursery will help with local reputation but this will not impact on secondary pupil numbers for many years without further progress on the development of a through-phases offer initiative. Other 'unique selling points' could also be explored for potential marketing purposes. The Trust could be asked to progress current discussions with the RSC concerning potential trust expansion within the area. Potential for a Sixth Form offer has already been discounted due to surplus local capacity.

Members acknowledged that significant limiting factors impacting on the aspiration to increase pupil numbers are the current RI Ofsted rating, the ability to demonstrate expansion capacity and Trust reputation locally with both community and potential partner schools.

The SBM advised that the academy needs only one further pupil to evidence increase of over 10% – which will enable an application for additional in-year funding – and that this position is being closely monitored.

**Q How has Pupil Premium Grant income been targeted and to what impact?**

The academy follows the Trust programme and strategy including use of Pixel to inform individual interventions programmes. There are a wide range of intervention programmes and impact is assessed and published in the Report which is published on the school website. Interventions included targeted curriculum support through to staff going out to homes to bring students in to do exams. Impact was evidenced in 'diminishing the differences' in pupil outcomes.

A key continued current focus is on diminishing the disadvantage gap for outcome for boys in English.

**Q Are there any issues with the building condition?**

The estate is generally good. There are plans to improve PE areas, but quotations received are all above available funding resulting in suspension of plans.

**Q Have alternative additional quotes been sought for the proposed programme of works for the PE areas or a revised, reduced programme of works being developed?**

The SBM advised that all options are currently being explored including investigating any potential grant funding opportunities.

**Q What is the position with Middle Leaders at Colchester Academy?**

The Principal advised that the quality of middle leadership at Colchester is variable. A number of individuals have been supported to improve but SLT capacity to mentor and support improvement of other staff is stretched – including through having to deliver cover for staff absence. The ongoing impact of the difficult decision to cut Class Supervisors (made on financial grounds) limits the ability of SLT to deliver key activities including supporting CPD for middle leaders and presenting associated risk.

The REP advised that although capacity is limited, the quality of support available to middle leaders is strong and there is clear evidence of consistency of practice and evidence that middle leaders are reacting significantly more positively.

Members noted that the REP is supporting the school including to develop comprehensive documentation to support staff training and development.

**Q Is pupil attendance a matter of concern?**

	<p>Attendance is improving but continues to be a challenge across the local area. Attendance for 2015/16 was just below national average. Attendance data has improved to 94.8% for 2016/17 (national data is not yet available to enable comparison).</p> <p><b>Q What is the position with safeguarding?</b> The Principal reported that the school Safeguarding Lead is strong, and that quality support is available through the Trust. The SCR is complete. Tracking system and processes are clear and strong.</p> <p><b>Q What is the academy's financial position – any financial risks?</b> The SBM advised that although the current year's budget is tight there are no significant concerns presenting risk.</p> <p>The RBM advised that staffing is very tight – with tension across all year groups and subjects and with the Principal delivering some teaching cover.</p> <p>The Principal reported focus on supporting a drive for increased pupil admission – including Saturday Open Events for Primary Pupil visits – evidencing significant support and commitment from staff and the development of strong partnership links with a number of local primaries. Members were advised of a number of ongoing discussions concerning potential Trust developments including support for the establishment of a Nursery on the School site and further partnerships with primary schools.</p> <p><b>SLT Capacity</b> Members acknowledged report of SLT capacity-stretch – which is reported to be being monitored closely by the Principal and the REP.</p> <p><b>Q Are there any matters you wish to raise for ARC discussion or for forwarding to the Trust Board?</b> The Principal formally thanked the REP for her support over recent months.</p> <p><i>The meeting ended.</i></p>
<b>Actions</b>	<p><b>Colchester Academy</b></p> <p><b>No specific actions identified.</b></p>
<b>7.3 Alde Valley Academy Discussion</b>	<p><b>ALDE VALLEY ACADEMY</b></p> <p><b>Mike Wilson, Principal, joined the meeting.</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed MW to the meeting and led introductions.</p> <p>The Chair confirmed the Principal's understanding of the purpose of the meeting and the role of the ARC within the Trusts Scheme of governance.</p> <p>The REP provided overview of the current position at Alde Valley Academy – focussing on the very successful recent Ofsted Inspection.</p> <p><b>Q What are the messages that the ARC and Trust Board needs to hear from Colchester Academy based on your personal experiences?</b></p> <p>Key points from the Principal's presentation of current priorities are highlighted below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Quality of teaching and learning</b> A focus on quality of teaching and learning to move staff out of current comfort zones to focus on raising standards. Members noted report of examples of outstanding teaching practice acknowledged evidence of no unsatisfactory teaching at AVA and discussed the Principal's perception that too many staff are delivering good standard but uninspiring teaching. Members welcomed report of focus at AVA on 'reminding people why they came into teaching' and creating ethos of pupil-led learning supported by encouragement of research and experiment as part of individual pupil learning journeys.</li> <li>• <b>School involvement in budget setting</b> Although the finance process is more informed and inclusive this year – due to the involvement of the RBM – budget and financial processes remain a cause of concern. The indicative budget needs to be shared at the very earliest possible stage to support curriculum planning and ensure best outcomes for children.</li> </ul> <p><b>AGREED: The RBM is asked to ensure the draft budget setting involved schools prior to Christmas.</b></p>

- **Proposal to close Sixth Form provision at AVA**

The Principal discussed the proposal to Trust Board to commence consultation on the closure of AVA 6<sup>th</sup> form due to ongoing very low numbers. Budget impact needs to be determined and communicated at the very earliest opportunity – including and lagged impact.

**AGREED: The RBM is asked to ensure that budget implications of closure of AVE Sixth Form are determined and shared with school at the very earliest opportunity**

- **Partnership with Suffolk New College**

The Principal provided update on the partnership with Suffolk New College the reactivation of part of the school site for lease to Suffolk New College to provide a vocational Post 16 offer on site. The Principal confirmed that initial numbers were lower than had been anticipated but that Suffolk New College had shared their future marketing proposals which are expected to secure increasing numbers – including an adult education offer from January 2018. The Principal confirmed that the partnership arrangement supports the vision of an all-through school and addresses need for vocational training in the locality.

- **Transport to school**

The Principal reported concerns regarding the future of LA provided school transport – which is currently the subject of a formal consultation exercise. There has been a reduction in the numbers of pupils accessing free transport from a prior-main feeder locality due to the opening of a Free School in that area. An alternative transport strategy proposal is being developed.

**Q Has a business case been put together to look at costs for the transport strategy proposal?**

The RBM advised that the Trust Finance Director is currently reviewing costed options for outright purchasing or hire of a minivan to provide home to school transport.

**Q How will transport costs be covered?**

Costs need to be covered from the school budget. The thesis is that sustaining transport which is free to families will secure additional pupil numbers and thereby income – and crucially will support retention of existing pupil numbers.

**Q Can a school-funded transport service be delivered and sustained?**

That is what the Business case will need to prove. There are concerns regarding the number of school buses on rural roads.

The Dir Secondary advised that AVA transport is an item for review at next Executive Leadership meeting.

Members urged caution relative to over-promising on matters which could be difficult to deliver.

**AGREED: The RBM is asked to ensure that the proposed case for school-provided transport at AVA is fully costed as part of a full business case and strategy.**

- Pupil numbers

**Q What is the current school capacity?**

The Principal advised that admission numbers had been reduced 110 with current roll at 450 pupils.

**Q How is a broad and balanced curriculum offered on such a small budget?**

With difficulty and continued focus on the bottom line – with significant commitment by a number of staff including managing impact of the Principal delivering a 30% timetable commitment.

**Q Is the future for the school secure?**

The recent Ofsted Report will help - a communications programme will be agreed with trust specialists to maximise impact. A Trust strategic plan is needed to support development of the school into the future. Dialogue with the LA and the Free School is needed to secure best outcomes for all – for example consideration could be given to developing specialisms.

	<p><b>Q Are there challenges with middle leadership/senior leadership at AVA?</b></p> <p>The Principal advised that middle leadership has developed significantly but needs further nurturing – providing the following examples –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The quality of marking and feedback has improved significantly – Principal’s focus has been able to move away from hands on – leading by example to oversight, to maintain standards.</li> <li>○ Attendance processes and management are delivering outstanding impact.</li> <li>○ Safeguarding processes and management are delivering outstanding impact. There is an outstanding school culture concerning safeguarding. A ‘best example’ was provided by the Principal – an occasion when a school cleaner challenged someone’s presence on the site.</li> </ul> <p>• <b>Community engagement</b> Community engagement is identified by the Principal as an area for further development in to the future.</p> <p><b>Q Is the Trust providing sufficient support to AVA around external communications?</b></p> <p>This will be sought by the Principal as the engagement agenda is progressed.</p> <p>Members acknowledged that Mike Wilson had been previously congratulated by the Trust Board for his excellent management at AVA and supported this accolade on the ground of their scrutiny and challenge at this meeting.</p> <p><i>The meeting ended.</i></p>
<b>ACTIONS</b>	<p><b>Alde Valley Academy</b></p> <p><b>The RBM is asked to ensure that the proposed case for school-provided transport at AVA is fully costed as part of a full business case and strategy.</b></p> <p><b>The RBM is asked to ensure the draft budget setting involved schools prior to Christmas.</b></p> <p><b>The RBM is asked to ensure that budget implications of closure of AVA Sixth Form are determined and shared with school at the very earliest opportunity</b></p>
<b>7.4 Castle Hill Juniors and Infants</b>	<p><b>CASTLE HILL</b></p> <p>Gemma Andrews, Principal, joined the meeting</p> <p>The Chair welcomed GA to the meeting and led introductions.</p> <p>The Chair confirmed the Principal’s understanding of the purpose of the meeting and the role of the ARC within the Trusts Scheme of governance.</p> <p><b>Q What are the messages that the ARC and Trust Board needs to hear from Castle Hill based on your personal experiences?</b></p> <p>The Principal’s highlighted the following key factors –</p> <p>There is recent history of significant staff turnover and turbulence including a complete change to the Senior Leadership Team over the last year.</p> <p>There have been significant HR issues at the school</p> <p>The last DfE monitoring visit provided significant challenge</p> <p>The current position of the school presents significant challenge relative to recruitment of quality staff.</p> <p>The Principal advised that her focus since joining the school in June 2017 has been to establish clear and strong culture expectations – to manage impact of cultural change and to develop leadership and management and team working.</p> <p>Members welcomed report that there is clear evidence of impact of improved team working– including through feedback from staff through the Ofsted Questionnaire – which was judged by the Inspector to be one of the strongest they had seen.</p> <p><b>Q What is your perception concerning Trust Reputation - how many staff at Castle Hill would say positive things about BTT?</b></p> <p>The Principal advised that a small but growing number of staff are likely to comment positively regarding the Trust. Part of the culture change driven by the Principal has been to stop the ‘us and them’ attitude adopted by too many staff using Trust arrangements as excuses and as part of a ‘blame’ culture. Members noted comment</p>

that work is still needed to ensure that staff feel part of the Trust as 'something bigger' and that they fully understand the workings of the Trust.

**Q What is the recruitment issue?**

There may be some reputational matters. There are concerns regarding some contract terms and conditions.

The Dir Primary advised that the Executive Leadership Team is currently reviewing recruitment matters including Bright Tribe contracts.

**AGREED: Outcomes from ELT review of recruitment and staff contract matters to be fed back to Principals.**

**Q Which parts of the Trust have most to do to support improved relationships with schools?**

Finance – there is lack of transparent clarity on finance. HR – staff and senior leader induction should be better. There have been problems communicating with IT. Estates support 'has been fantastic'.

**Q What is the position at Castle Hill regarding community reputation?**

The Principal advised current focus on seeking to re-establish relationships with the local community – based on honesty and transparency. Members noted that the CH Drive team is being strengthened and now includes the head of a local school as a Drive Team member.

**Q In which specific areas is CH impacting on improving outcomes for children?**

The Principal reported that there are currently too many inconsistencies across school and a need for continued focus on bullying and behaviour management. The introduction of Trauma and the recruitment of a Vice Principal trained in pivotal approach to behaviour will drive improvements given the high levels of family mental health concerns and issues with child: adult interaction.

**Q What further support could the Trust provide to you?**

Additional financial support would enable deployment of a non-teaching trauma enforced specialist trained lead. The recruitment of additional HLTAs would be beneficial. The Principal advised the benefit to children at CH of seeing familiar faces rather than external support. Members noted report that a decision to deploy all TAs on the playground to support structured play has dramatically reduced the number of behaviour incidents. TA support is now strictly timetabled to maximise impact. Members noted that issues concerning TA contracted hours and hours actually worked is currently being explored.

The Principal questioned whether school could recruit apprentice TAs and whether thought was being given to a trust-wide apprenticeship programme.

**AGREED: The Executive Leadership Team are asked to look at potential benefit of a trust-wide apprenticeship strategy.**

**Q What is the position with outcome projections for 2018?**

The Principal advised that assessment projects low outcomes for the current year 6 cohort. Pupil progress further down the school is better. Baseline assessments have been completed.

Intervention support has not yet started - staff are focussing on plugging gaps through lesson planning. There is strong focus on CPD – staff meetings have been suspended in favour of additional training time. Staff communications are being delivered in writing.

**Q With regard to year 6 – have specific foci been identified – what are the priorities?**

The Principal confirmed significant focus on improving outcomes for the current year 6 cohort across both Maths and English. The school has joined a local hub and is engaged in Maths Mastery and Talk for Writing activities. Talk for Writing is reported to be making significant impact. Ofsted reported evidence of good reading during the recent inspection. A programme of reading for pleasure is already in place at the school as is whole class reading activities. A funding bid has recently been submitted for development of outdoor areas to support reading activities

Members noted that SSC came out strong in Ofsted inspection.

The Principal advised that learning leaders have been appointed to each year group and that team planting takes place on a regular basis. SATs were conducted in a very formal manner which did not suit the children at CH – new assessment and testing arrangements should encourage best performance from the children moving forwards.

Quality of teaching and learning is improving across school and is consistently Good in years 3,4 and 5.

	<p><b>Q Do you have any lessons to share with the Board from your journey to date?</b> This is an exciting time for CH which is at the beginning of an improvement journey.</p> <p>It would be good to understand how the Trust support staff well-being.</p> <p>There is need for additional educational psychologist support.</p> <p>It would be good to see increased pooling of resources between schools and more joint working across the area.</p> <p><b>Q Do you have a 5-year plan for CH?</b> The Principal shared her vision for 2022 as –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A single school not 2 schools on the same site</li> <li>The school having secured an Outstanding Ofsted judgement</li> <li>The enhancement of provision through an operating on-site nursery</li> <li>The school being judged as a school of excellence within the locality</li> <li>CH as part of a through-school for ages 4-16 years</li> <li>A school which is inclusive – welcoming children with MLD</li> </ul> <p><b>AGREED: Trust Board thoughts on the establishment of a single school at CH – to be shared with the Principal.</b></p> <p><b>Q Do you have any concerns with building condition?</b> The school has now been developed into a single building - issues with the roof and windows have already been discussed with Trust Estates staff.</p> <p><b>Q Are there any matters not yet covered which you would like to raise – particularly for sharing with the Trust Board?</b> The Principal advised that she is keen to be involved in helping to shape Trust direction and in developing partnerships within the East area and across the Trust.</p> <p><i>The meeting ended.</i></p>
<b>Actions</b>	<p><b>Castle Hill</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Outcomes from ELT review of recruitment and staff contract matters to be fed back to Principals.</b></li> <li>• <b>Trust Board thoughts on the establishment of a single school at CH – to be shared with the Principal.</b></li> <li>• <b>The Executive Leadership Team are asked to look at potential benefit of a trust-wide apprenticeship strategy.</b></li> </ul>
<b>AGENDA ITEM 8</b>	<b>Individual School Financial Summary</b>
<b>Discussion</b>	Members reviewed report from the RBM evidencing no significant regional financial risk.
<b>Action</b>	None required.
<b>AGENDA ITEM 9</b>	<b>Drive Team Report</b>
<b>Discussion</b>	<p>Drive Team Reports which had been circulated with Agenda papers were reviewed.</p> <p><b>AGREED: ARC Chair's views regarding the format of Drive Team reporting - to be fed into the relevant governance task and finish group considerations.</b></p>
<b>Action</b>	<b>Dir Primary to work with the Trusts Executive Manager to review governance arrangements including format of Drive Team reporting to ARCs.</b>
<b>AGENDA ITEM 10</b>	<b>Trust Board – Key messages and feedback – East Region</b>
	<b>ARC membership</b> – Further review around ARC membership needed to achieve majority of members who have a regional remit and ambition.

	<p><b>Supporting governance competence</b> - the question of potential benefit of professional clerking service support for ARCs – is to be considered further off-line through the services of the Trusts' Executive Manager.</p> <p><b>Recruitment &amp; retention</b> - ensure Board awareness of ongoing difficulties around recruitment and retention and recommend focus on strategic review of the BTT contract and on articulating the BTT 'offer' to staff / Outcomes from ELT review of recruitment and staff contract matters to be fed back to Principals.</p> <p><b>REP role</b> - to confirm the importance of in-built flexibility, contingency and appropriate guidance on Trust 'risk-tolerance' relative to REP decisions making – within the overall framework of trust accountabilities</p> <p><b>Internal Communications</b> - The Executive Leadership Team to be tasked to review -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential for inclusion of articles from REPs / Directors / Trustees in school newsletters.</li> <li>• A focus on messaging aimed at younger staff concerning opportunities within the broader Trusts.</li> </ul> <p><b>Increasing Pupil Roll at Cliff Lane</b> - The Trust Estates Team is asked to review potential need and options for potential future building development to accommodate projected increased pupil numbers at Cliff Lane</p> <p><b>Potential Transport Strategy – Alde Valley Academy</b> - The RBM is asked to ensure that the proposed case for school-provided transport at AVA is fully costed as part of a full business case and strategy.</p> <p><b>Budget Setting</b> – request that draft budget setting involves schools prior to Christmas</p> <p><b>Budget impact of closure of 6<sup>th</sup> Form provision at AVA</b> - The RBM is asked to ensure that budget implications of closure of AVA Sixth Form are determined and shared with school at the very earliest opportunity.</p> <p><b>Potential for a single school at CH</b> - Trust Board thoughts on the establishment of a single school at CH – to be shared with the Principal.</p> <p><b>Potential Trust-wide apprenticeship strategy</b> - The Executive Leadership Team are asked to look at potential benefit of a trust-wide apprenticeship strategy.</p> <p><b>ARC Development</b> - The REP to seek feedback from Principals concerning their views on how the ARC process could best support their activities the Executive Manager to continue to develop reporting process and pro forma.</p>
<b>Action</b>	<b>Clerk to forward Key Messages and Feedback from the East ARC for Trust Board review at their next meeting.</b>
<b>AGENDA ITEM 11</b>	<b>Training</b>
<b>Discussion</b>	No matters were presented for consideration under this heading.
<b>Action</b>	No actions were agreed under this heading.

**There being no further business the meeting closed at 16:07**