Minutes

Meeting of the Oldham Learning Board
Thursday 26 Sept 2024
Spindles Board Room
at 1:30pm

Present:	**Chair**	**Jane Acklam**		
	Vice-Chair			
	Primary Districts	**Hilary Henderson**	**Council**	**Matt Bulmer** **Cllr Ali**
	Post 16	**Alan Benvie**	**MAT**	**Jayne Clarke** **Jessica Giraud**
	Secondary	**Sarah North**		
In Attendance	**Oldham Council**	**Amber Burton** **Victoria Harold**		
	Advisor	**Tony Shepherd**	**Administrator**	**Chantelle Fraser**
Absent:	**Primary District**	**Zaira Cook** **Gillian Kay** **Vicki Oldham** **Mary Garvey**	**Council**	**Gerard Jones**
	DFE	**Emma Argyle**	**Teaching school**	**Katie Dallender**
	Research School	**Louise Astbury**	**Secondary**	**Charlotte Evans**
	Teaching school	**Katie Dallender**	**Specialist**	**Sue Caine**

1. **Welcome, Apologies and Introductions**

JA welcomed Board members to the meeting. Apologies were received from Zaira Cook, Gillian Kay, Vicki Oldham, Emma Argyle, Louise Astbury, Katie Dallender, Sue Caine, Gerard Jones and Charlotte Evans.

2. **Minutes and matters arising**

JA confirmed that all relevant papers had been circulated prior to the meeting and emphasised that the matters discussed are confidential. The minutes from the previous meeting were unanimously agreed upon, with all actions reviewed and addressed:

- **MB's Update on Out-of-Borough Children:**
  MB noted that the number of out-of-borough children remains comparatively low compared to Oldham children. These figures were communicated during the meeting.

Webinar Distribution for SEND: It was agreed that AB will continue sending out a list of national webinars related to SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) to colleagues for appropriate distribution.

Confidentiality of Population Data: MB reiterated that population data of schools should **not** be shared externally.

Action: AB to share information of SEND Webinars

3. Quality of Education

TS shared presentation with colleagues, which was thoroughly discussed in detail during the meeting. Strategies to address changes in attendance continue to be developed, with the aim of improving overall attendance rates across schools. A focused piece of work on transitioning from Early Years into Reception has been completed, resulting in a significant improvement in attendance. This improvement was acknowledged and noted by the team.

AB celebrated the success of advanced apprentice levels, significantly above national average. TS collating what happens at KS5 and the focus need to spread. Comms to link in with Alan and Susanna about celebrating the success. **Action**: TS to link AB with Comms for celebrating successes

Cllr A thanked the board for their dedication to Oldham and emphasises that the community benefits greatly from the efforts put into education. Inquires with TS about how we will perform on a national scale. TS anticipates improvement at KS4, bringing results closer to the national averages, while there may be a slight decline at KS2. This data will be shared once available. TOAN has experienced a 19% increase from 2019 to 2024, which is a significant achievement. KS5 A-E results are above the national average.

MB emphasised the importance of speaking as a unified system across the borough. The message should be clear: '*if you live in Oldham, you should take pride in the quality of education and provision available here'*. MB suggested that this message needs to be consistently promoted throughout the borough, especially during events like open days, where the excellence of Oldham's education system should be confidently highlighted. A collective voice is essential to build a strong and positive narrative around local education.

TS discussed the developments in Oldham currently being undertaken. Town Centre plans to be brought to board and discussed.

JA asked secondaries for their feedback on the plans. MB shared news from OAPSH and advised the actions from this within the strategic partnership. Unique successes are being encouraged throughout Borough secondaries at the moment.

JA – In the last MAT meeting, the concern was raised about "working together." MB acknowledged that this hasn't fully materialised yet, but progress is being made. TS mentioned that there is still work to be done between phases, and there are promising developments to support this effort. JA noted that a cultural shift is beginning to take place. JG agreed, stating that the atmosphere feels much different now, with a more collaborative approach emerging.

4. Population

TS shares slides and discussed in detail. TS advises members to review the paper that has been sent to them today for information.

The paper show that there will be 20% spare capacity across the Primary system next year and this will remain.

Recent SCAP (School Capacity and Projections) data indicate significant shifts in the demographic landscape, leading to changes in school capacity. Marketing efforts from schools might have contributed to these changes in demand and capacity. Proposal plans are currently under development to address the new capacity demands. Consultations

with Diocese and strategic partners have already taken place, yielding positive results. The focus is on identifying schools with capacity gaps, and this will be communicated at the next Board meeting.

To mitigate these challenges, work is being conducted with the admissions team and schools. Although efforts are being made to balance enrolment numbers, reducing the Published Admission Number (PAN) is not currently on the agenda. Schools may face difficulties in the current situation, but the schools finance team is working closely with them to develop sustainable plans moving forward.

JC questioned areas of data and this was clarified by TS.

MB – There is currently no desire to close schools, except in exceptional circumstances. While primary outcomes fell last year, concerns about the quality of education alone do not warrant closures. It was noted that many schools with significant spare capacity are part of MATs. MB pointed out that while financial data is available for maintained schools, the same data is not available for MATs. The Local Authority will not support a reduction in PANs across schools. This information is being shared to ensure schools are aware of the current stance and the possible system-wide response. HH will take this information back to Primary Heads for further discussion.

National Policy

MB indicated that by January 2025, regional school improvement teams will be established, with the national policy team in London coordinating efforts. They will leverage existing contemporary models and scale them up. The support provided by Cranmer will be tailored and aligned with the national context. We will ensure this feedback reaches the DfE. The opportunity area and PEIA will have some influence on this feedback. There is a strong belief that accountability will focus on inclusion and attendance, and that local authorities will have a more significant role in managing admissions, addressing issues related to admissions more effectively.

MB requested any feedback on school improvements go direct to TS to facilitate this.

5. Priorities

JA introduced the new priorities for 2024/25 which continue to be for consideration by Board.

- **SEND**

MB provided SEND update for members, accompanied by slides that are confidential. These slides contained sensitive information that should not be shared outside of this group. HH Heads expressed concerns regarding the sustainability of staffing and upskilling of teaching assistants in response to the increasing demands in SEND support. MB acknowledged these concerns and reiterated that the responsibility for addressing them falls on both schools and the LA. MB emphasised that we must adapt to this growing challenge as part of an evolving landscape in SEND education and share good practice.
VH shared important papers and news regarding available grant funding for the Change Partnership Programme and the Delivery Better Value New Inclusion Roles initiative. These roles are designed to enhance support for schools, children, young people, and families, particularly in the area of SEND.

The team explored how these new inclusion roles could be effectively utilised in schools to meet their specific needs. Transition support for children and young people moving through different stages of their education**.** Specialist SEND teaching, teaching assistants and mental health teams**,** providing valuable advice and support for both teachers and families. The discussion centred on adapting these roles to suit the individual requirements of schools, ensuring that they align with the broader goals of supporting SEND students and improving inclusion for a more strategic and collaborative approach to SEND.

VH provided an update on the Change Partnership Programme grant funding, which is now under review moving forward. Over the duration of this programme, several important roles and initiatives have been established, including:

- Family Liaison roles**:** Strengthening relationships between schools, families, and communities to improve support for children with SEND.

- Preparation for Adulthood (PFA) roles**:** Supporting young people with SEND in their transition to adulthood, with a focus on career readiness and independent living.
- Home Educated Advisory Teacher**:** Employed through the programme to enhance the development of home education, offering guidance and support to families engaged in this educational approach.
- Alternative Provision Taskforce: In addition, the Alternative Provision Taskforce has been commissioned to Kingsland. This taskforce has successfully developed a multi-agency team that provides access for young people (YP) to participate in alternative education programmes, ensuring they receive tailored support outside of mainstream settings.
- Speech and Language Development: Ongoing work is being conducted to improve the early identification of speech and language needs**.** This initiative aims to support children at earlier stages, ensuring timely intervention and assistance in addressing any developmental challenges in speech and communication.

AB provides positive feedback for the programme and shared good practice experienced at the college.

MB - There was a recent data release from the DfE showing that Oldham ranks twelfth. While the perception may be that we are underperforming, this is not accurate. JA emphasised the importance of ensuring this positive message is communicated clearly across all schools

Action: VH to provide update of programmes at the next Board

- **Attendance**

The attendance slides were discussed between the Board, presenting an end-of-year summary for members to review. The data highlights several key achievements across the year, showcasing successes in improving attendance and engagement across different levels of education.

Secondary Education: There has been a significant improvement in attendance rates, attributed to the success of targeted programmes implemented throughout the year. These programmes have been so effective that they are now being expanded and developed with the LAs across the Borough. The transition work from Year 6 to Year 7 has shown marked improvement, helping students adjust smoothly to secondary school. Additionally, the Reception to Year 1 transition programme has seen similar success, with data reflecting notable progress in attendance and engagement at these early stages.

Action: Literacy to be discussed by JA/GK/TS and an item at next Board meeting
Action: Recruitment and Retention as an item at next Board meeting.

6. Expanding Board membership

TS has shared a link for members to review and reflect on. The Board is invited to consider whether implementing this in Oldham would be beneficial.

https://www.leedslearningalliance.org/partners/

Are these areas that the Board believes would add value?

JA suggested that there needs to be a consultation on the structure and focus of the Oldham Learning Board for the next academic year. TS proposed that the next phase should concentrate on leadership development across partners in the borough and future planning. MB emphasized the importance of staying aligned with current priorities, noting that the education system is expected to undergo changes over the next 12-18 months, and we should take a holistic approach in our considerations.

MB noted the drop in attendance at Oldham Learning Board.
Alternative approaches were discussed between members.

Action: Expanding board as a rolling agenda item.

7. Date of next meeting; AOB

Next OL Board – Thursday 28 November Spindles Board Room

HH – Family Hubs - representing school attendance huge impact across Oldham. HH advises the positive impact this is having. Laura Williams delivered an update on the Family Hubs Board and the programmes that are included within the Board.

JA thanked all members for attendance.

JC raised a query about the charge for subject networks and leadership. TS clarified that an agreement at the Schools Forum gives the authority to provide such services free of charge for maintained schools. As this is not the case for academies, equivalent costs are passed on to trusts.

8.1 Summary of actions

	Action	**Responsibility**
1	Share information of SEND Webinars	**ABenvie**
2	TS to link AB with Comms for celebrating successes	**TS**
3	Provide update of SEND programmes at the next Board	**VHarold**
4	Priority Area - Literacy: to be discussed with JA/GK/TS and brought to the next Board meeting	**JA/GK/TS**
5	Priority Area: Recruitment and Retention as an item at next Board meeting.	**JA/GK/TS**
6	Expanding board as a rolling agenda item.	**JA/GK/TS**

Meeting finished: **15:30pm**