Minutes

Meeting of the Oldham Learning Board
Thursday 28 November 2024
Spindles Board Room
at 1:30pm

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

1. **Welcome, Apologies and Introductions**

JA welcomed Board members to the meeting. Apologies were received from Julie Daniels, Cllr Ali, Jayne Clarke, Hilary Henderson and Jess Giraud.

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 all approved.

3. Priorities

JA introduced the new priorities for 2024/25 which are now

- **SEND**

VH provided an overview previously. This update on Delivering Better Value Programme is divided into priority areas:

- SEMH (Social, Emotional, and Mental Health): Activities are underway in 10 schools, comprising 3 secondary schools and 7 primary schools, using a data-driven approach. Each school has an advisory teacher. There is an acknowledged need to address issues of misidentification in SEMH, a key area for improvement. The programme is being developed collaboratively with POINT and educational psychologists (EPs) to engage effectively with the community.
- SEND Improvement: A coordinated events calendar has been shared with all SENCOs, featuring diverse training opportunities designed to meet Oldham's specific needs. Collaboration with the QEST team ensures specialist input is incorporated.
- Pupil Intervention Programme: This programme focuses on social interventions and is fully subscribed, with all slots currently filled.
- Post-Diagnostic Support for Schools: A specialist visits schools post-diagnosis to provide check-ins and tailored support.
- Transition from Year 6 to Year 7: This remains a high-priority area for improvement. A task-and-finish group will convene on 10 December to address this issue. Input and interest from primary school leaders are sought, with a request for districts to share this opportunity.
- Enhanced EBSA Offer: Supervision sessions supported by CAMHS colleagues have received positive feedback and continue to yield strong outcomes.
- Supporting parents with parent submissions of EHC requests.

These are in addition to all services currently being delivered.

LA: What measures are being used to assess impact?
VH: The data team will conduct a full analysis to evaluate outcomes. Additionally, POINT will host coffee mornings to engage with parents and gather their feedback. By incorporating parent voice, we aim to shape and refine future sessions effectively.

VH will return with further update at Summer Board.

- **Attendance**

TS shared slides and updates on attendance data, noting that Oldham continues to perform well compared to statistical neighbours. In GM and NW meetings, Oldham has been highlighted positively, underscoring the impactful work being led by Anne and John.

A paper on analysis of links between KS2 attendance and Writing outcome was reviewed. The attendance figure of 94% seems to be significant. Boys' writing performance including those with fsm and SEND is significantly weaker than that of girls. This trend spans all educational phases but is pronounced at KS2.

A bid for KS2 PEIA funding was successful. Writing and attendance interventions are planned in collaboration with primary schools.

SN: Could further data analysis be completed for ethnicity too?
LA: We need to really careful how we respond to this, as previous methods have not necessarily worked.

GK: Can we have information on disadvantage and attendance / attainment?
LA: The focus of the subject networks is vocabulary in reading before we can tackle attendance. Further support required from senior leaders.
Action: JG to explore data on ethnicity / disadvantage on attendance.

- **Literacy**

TS shared slides highlighting that outcomes remain a challenge, with a persistent gap in writing over time. Previous work with One Education supported improvements.

Focus on writing: A targeted approach to address writing outcomes has been devised and commissioned, involving:

- Pinnacle: Curriculum leadership
- EMTS: Curriculum Networks
- One Education: KS1 & KS2 moderation
- English Hub: Phonics and reading, but not directly addressing writing
- SIPs: Prioritising key areas

JA confirmed that this issue was raised at the CEO Roundtable following a detailed data analysis. CEOs have been asked to consider professional development that aligns specifically with Oldham's needs rather than generic nationwide initiatives. They were also encouraged to review their data to track improvements over time.

GK/KD: Feedback from district heads indicates a desire for greater clarity on what is being covered in training session and agendas. They would like to understand the purpose and content of these sessions to ensure that the leaders they send are engaging in activities aligned with their schools' curriculum vision and priorities. KD confirms that a briefing was distributed for attendance to these training events. VO: Could this information be shared at Heads Forum?
JA advised districts to contact KD directly for information if ever needed.

Action: KD/Julie Stevens to discuss and share required information with Heads.

- **Recruitment and Retention**

MB shared details of considerations being explored to promote teacher recruitment and retention in Oldham. These ideas are structured around four key themes:

- **Theme 1: Greater Presence and Teaching Career Options in Schools**

The aim is to increase the visibility of teaching as a career by showcasing how rewarding and impactful it can be. This includes careers events, inviting former students back to share their experiences, and holding assemblies that highlight the importance of teaching.

- **Theme 2: Career Opportunities in Communities**

This involves working across various community sectors to elevate the profile of teaching and celebrate the diversity within the profession. The focus is on raising awareness of teaching as a career option within local communities.

- **Theme 3: Offers in Oldham**

This theme focuses on promoting professional development opportunities available in Oldham, including CPD (Continuing Professional Development) offers, teaching networks, and opportunities for teachers to develop specialist skills.

- **Theme 4: Flexible working**

MB and KD met with Luke Sparks, CEO of Dixons Academy Trust, who shared insights on the flexible working model that has been implemented through the trust. They discussed the benefits and challenges of this approach to work-life balance for teachers.

MB opened the floor for discussion, acknowledging that raising the profile of teaching and addressing negative perceptions has proven challenging. Recruitment efforts are ongoing throughout the year. Some feedback suggests that travel and commuting costs are a significant concern for potential recruits, which may be hindering interest in teaching roles in Oldham. LA also suggests that promoting the pension aspects of the profession would help. AB discussed the new scheme Industry Associates with members that could be aligned to the themes. LA suggests capturing Oldham teachers who were taught locally to raise the profile. MB invite members to promote the message through all networks in Oldham.

KD encourages members to read the report from Teach First on A roadmap to get GEN Z into the class. Link as follows: https://www.teachfirst.org.uk/sites/default/files/2024-09/Tomorrows_teachers_Teach_First_report.pdf

KD reaffirmed the event being organised for schools between Oldham Athletic and Brian Cox event. This is still being committed to and KD will follow up on this as soon as the information becomes available.

Action: MB to work with Comms Team to move this forward.

4. **Improving Education in Oldham: Key Messages**

TS shared slides with members, and key messages were discussed in detail. Tony shares the successes of schools in the media. Improvements are being observed in some areas of education. Efforts are underway to collaborate with the communications team to highlight successes, ensuring clear and transparent information about Oldham schools and their governance. The comms team will work closely with TS to develop and share these messages across the Borough. The successes of schools are evident at the moment with the improvements from Ofsted and many are maintaining or improving their Ofsted grade. Oldham is one of the most inclusive places to come and have your child educated and this is a message we need to make people aware of this. If you would like to share any communications, please do showcase this with the Comms Team.

ABenvie: T-Levels are published on the same day as A-Levels, highlighting their growing importance. Next week marks T-Level Week, during which successes from across the borough will be celebrated. It is crucial to include Technical Professional routes in key messages, as Oldham is already advancing in this area. When sharing A-Level data, T-Level achievements should also be showcased. Oldham is outperforming other areas in T-Level outcomes, with AB sharing notable successes of students at Skills Wheels. There is significant momentum, and it is vital to celebrate and promote each other's successes to further this positive trend. ZC requested if talks on T-Levels could be carried out with Year 5-6 students.

Action: AY to work with post 16 partnership to develop format for sharing wider KS5 outcomes information.

5. **School and Academy Improvement potential models**

TS shared RISE slides with members, providing updates on school improvements based on John Edwards' presentation. A renewed focus on schools and school improvement has emerged, addressing gaps in this area that existed previously. However, direction from ministers in relatively vague at the moment.

There remains encouragement for schools to transition to academies. Additional resources and personnel are being introduced, with the offer becoming more centralised. For the North-West region, three advisors will be assigned to support this work. Oldham's interest lies in adopting a different approach, and these concerns have been communicated to the Department for Education (DfE). However, a response has not yet been received and given they are advertising three new posts it is unlikely this will be considered. For those schools that need a targeted offer straight away appointments will be made imminently.

MB has just returned from a meeting with VB, where they shared positive updates about Oldham's progress. Notably, in secondary schools, Oldham is the most improved across Greater Manchester (GM) in terms of attendance, including a significant reduction in persistent absence. This improvement has been supported by additional funding, which is now being extended to Key Stage 2 (KS2) to further enhance attendance.

Oldham also stands out as the most inclusive primary school borough in GM. Additionally, secondary schools in Oldham are excluding fewer students compared to other GM boroughs. Electively home-educated students in Oldham are performing the best within the GM boroughs.

MB: We need to ascertain what is a departmental offer versus how we make that land locally. We need local providers who provide local context. What is the opportunity for structures and relationships happening at a local level. Having an approach that looks different in different places. Forward planning shows that a local needs assessment will be completed.

6. Expanding Board membership and remit

The Leeds Learning Alliance is chaired independently and is not facilitated by the council, it has been developed over the last 3-4 years. Over time, it has broadened its representation to address a variety of issues. Currently, Leeds is focusing on areas such as inclusion and knife crime, with its remit extending beyond education to encompass all community-related concerns.
The Leeds Learning Alliance includes representatives from a diverse range of sectors, such as the police, sporting professionals, and social workers. This broad representation could present a valuable opportunity for the Oldham Leadership (OL) Board to collaborate and align its efforts with these wider community-focused initiatives.

Action: JA/TS to attend Leeds learning Partnership next week and provide update at next Board.

7. AOB and Date of next meeting;

Next OL Board – Thursday 20 March 2025 Spindles Board Room

HH - representative of **North District** summary:

We have been promoting the implementation of 'Studybugs' attendance monitoring app which has evidence of improving attendance in schools and utilises automated alerts, messages and letters therefore being a huge time saving aspect of this system. We had Fiona Holmes from Studybugs talk to the North District (high interest from here) and presentation also being given on Monday this week to the Oldham Heads. A small number of Oldham schools already use this.

Jane Henderson from Royton Academy North attended to promote their involvement with local primary schools. They have a theatre that can be used by primary schools for productions. Also, their cadet group could be available to come into schools to work with primary school children.

The district still carries out writing moderation work and monitors the impact of high-quality phonics teaching.
Discussions held around the Oldham writing training as to whether this would be additional new material to that already delivered by One Education. Some reports identify it seems to be similar so far. Also questions about the subject leader training for different subjects having more details as small schools (one form entry) struggle to release teachers when there is more than one network meeting in the same week.
Some heads had attended the Dfe discussions around nurseries for schools interested to submit plans by mid-December.

8.1 Summary of actions

	Action	Responsibility
1	Explore data on ethnicity / disadvantage on attendance.	**JG**
2	MB to work with Comms Team regarding raising the profile of teaching.	**MB**
3	Attend Leeds learning Partnership next week and provide update at next Board.	**JA/TS**
4	VH to return at summer term Board with update on SEND	**VH**
5	Work with post 16 partnership to develop format for sharing wider KS5 outcomes	**AY**
6	KD/JS to discuss and share required information with Heads.	**KD/JS**

Meeting finished: **15:30pm**