

## **SSSFN Executive Heads report to the Governing Body**

May 2014

### **Student Data**

Governors have previously been provided with all the most up to date Progress and Data reports. Data for the Spring term will be published after half term.

### **Budget Update**

Having now acquired Academy status we have been finalising the new Academy Budget. This has been presented to the R&P committee for agreement.

The new budget highlights the following issues :

A deficit is likely from the closing balance on the NCC maintained budget. A detailed explanation of this has been provided for R&P committee members but in summary results from low income from NCC and increasing cost of Alternative Provision. Staff absence is also a large contributing factor.

The new Academy budget predicts a deficit in the 2014/2015 academic year which then turns to a surplus in following years. However to achieve this the Academy must :

- Increase income from CST by £100,000
- Agree additional income for Earthsea of £150,000 over two years
- Increase the NCC income by £1,000 per place from September 2015
- Increase the commissioned places by 10
- Reduce Alternative Provision Spending to £550,000
- Reduce staff travel cost by £10k
- Reduce staffing costs by £80,000 over two years

Although very challenging targets these have all been set as achievable aims. Governors will wish to monitor the schools progress towards these targets.

### **Cash Flow**

The move to Academy brings new exciting challenges. Since we now operate from our own bank account we have to ensure at all times that there is sufficient cash in the account to meet expenditure (particularly wages)

Since our income now arrives in equal monthly payments from NCC and DFE we are somewhat challenged due to the fact that our expenditure is not equally spread during the year. Hence in July we will have spent a large amount but not yet have received all the money. We are in negotiations regarding how to overcome this issue.

### **Finance Software**

Since conversion on 1<sup>st</sup> April the School has been operating with PSFinancials which was the finance system chosen by the R&P committee.

Although challenging this move has proven to be largely successful and gives us much greater access to information and reporting in order to track expenditure and meet the targets outlined above.

One issue remains which is the ability for the PS Financials help desk to access our computers to provide support. This has proven difficult due to the policies and attitude of NCC ICT. I am meeting with the Head of Corporate ICT to discuss this matter.

### **Additional Income**

We are exploring a number of routes to access additional income.

We have been commissioned this term by NCC to provide the Specialist Partner role to the new Behaviour SRB's at KS3/4. This brings in 0.6FTE equivalent funding of a teacher post. Obviously this will only be additional income if we can subsume the role into current staffing

Similarly we have opened negotiations with both NCC and Childhood First about the correct funding of placements at Earthsea. Currently Earthsea is funded at the same level as the rest of the SSSFN and does not receive additional funding to recognise the specialist work.

## **Staffing Issues**

R&P committee has recently conducted a review of the pay scales for some CST staff. This may result in agreement to increase the Reintegration TA scale to SSA. However the request for higher remuneration from SSSA colleagues is less likely to be successful. This is likely to cause ill feeling amongst these colleagues and the school will need to give consideration to how best to deal with this.

Staffing levels generally are good and we are continuing to get good applications from all posts advertised.

We have recently replaced English and Maths teachers at DBS as well as recruiting new SSA and TA colleagues to fill vacancies arising through resignation.

However staff absence continues to be high and the R&P committee will soon be asked to consider new more rigorous procedures to challenge staff absence. Alongside this the school is consulting with staff on more rigorous guidelines around when agreed paid leave will be granted. Needless to say these issues are not without impact on morale. Staffing and student levels in primary remain a concern and the R&P committee will be asked to agree to revise the staffing structure to allow for more Primary Leadership at Locksley where the issue has been most acute.

Leadership staffing also requires further consideration in light of the need to save money from staffing. R&P committee will be asked to consider the efficacy of all XLT roles requiring qualified teachers, especially where no teaching is required.

Downward pressure on budgets and particularly alternative provision will mean that the timetable for next academic year is also more tight and staff contact time may increase. Whilst this is still likely to be lower than normal in mainstream settings, it will inevitably be felt keenly by staff.

There is currently one member of support staff on long term sick leave awaiting an investigatory process

There is one teacher on long term sick but expected to return in September

There are two teaching posts currently vacant (filled with supply) but with candidates to fill them from September.

## **Capital Developments**

The appointment of the Premises Manager and the ongoing hard work of the Premises Committee means that this is an area of strength for the school. The Health and Safety requirements for the school remain well met and we have recently agreed some limited capital expenditure to alleviate key issues. These include :

- Replacement of the Boiler at Earthsea
- Heat Guard replacements at Brooklands and DBS

As an Academy we now need to consider what projects we wish to develop and bid for under the Academy capital projects process.

Whilst we may not be successful, it is important that we plan our next stages of development.

In the coming weeks I shall be working with the Premises manager and other key staff to draw up a list of proposed projects which will come to the PHS committee for approval. These will then form the backbone of any future bids to the DFE for capital works.

## **Child Support Team**

The CST continues to be successful and popular with schools. We are not aware of any school who has chosen to not re-subscribe to the second year and many schools continue to subscribe who did not previously.

Since April 2014 we have added in support for ASD into the CST offer and are in the process of extending the Clinical Psychology offer through the appointment of an assistant psychologist to support Jude Hatton.

One area of concern lies with Educational Psychology. We contract a private EP for two days a week to work in the CST but find that this is constantly over subscribed and

waiting times are too long. However we have not chosen to add more time to this facility because (a) cost and (b) concerns over the quality. Instead we have invested in the new assistant psychologist in the hope of being able to divert more work to that team and away from Educational Psychology.

The other challenge for the CST is to grow the income from this service by £100,000 to meet our budgetary targets without increasing the staffing complement. This will require careful management to ensure staff workload is manageable and service does not suffer.

### **Creating Consistency**

The SSSFN continues to look more and more like a single school. From September 2014 the secondary timetables will be further aligned and will all be stored electronically on our School Information System (SIMS)

Subject leaders are now meeting across bases and working more collaboratively and collectively. Vicki Setters in her Deputy Head role is now co-ordinating this subject leader group and will be driving further consistency and improvement in our academic quality assurance.

### **Staff Wellbeing and CPD**

Feedback from recent union JCC meetings indicates that staff are generally happy with the school and wellbeing is positive. However high workload and increasing pressures as outlined above will continue to challenge that.

The new staff forums will give staff a greater voice in the school and help us to ensure our governance is truly co-operative and I believe staff will welcome this.

I think the pressure of increased numbers has been most acutely felt by colleagues in Primary teams where increased numbers has also meant increasing levels of complexity and challenge. It should be noted that the staff have generally risen superbly to meet these new challenges.

In the Spring term all staff accessed CPD in Teaching and Learning whilst selected colleagues accessed higher level training in Autistic Spectrum conditions and others are training in Mentoring.

Staff also can now access termly workshops run by Jude our clinical Psychologist.

### **Improvement Planning**

Attached with this report is the RAG rated version of our School Improvement plan which illustrates the great progress we have made in most areas. This should be looked at alongside the progress reports previously circulated.

All Governors are invited to attend the Governor Scrutiny day on **26<sup>th</sup> June** when you will be able to talk to XLT members and provide support and challenge around each of their individual areas of responsibility.

### **Safeguarding**

A full safeguarding report was provided with at the last meeting. Attached to this report is a progress report which shows the academic tracking of children on Child Protection Plans.

### **Academy Status**

With great pleasure this is the last time I shall include this section in my Heads report. As governors will hopefully be aware we became an academy finally on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014. We are officially the largest Alternative Provision Academy in the country. In future I shall replace this section with the following

### **SSSCAT Updates**

For clarity SSSCAT is the Short Stay School Co-operative Academy Trust and is the body which now runs the SSSFN. The trustees of the SSSCAT are

Phil Harris  
Sue Cooke

Chris Spencer  
Clive Evans

SSSCAT trustees sit on the Governing body of the SSSFN and fulfil their oversight of the SSSFN through the Governing body.

### **Ofsted Inspection**

As with my last report – I wish to reflect on the work undertaken against our Ofsted improvement points.

**Differentiation** – The inspectors found a number of examples where lessons were not sufficiently adapted to meet the needs of all learners in the group.

Lesson Planning and Work Scrutiny have been sharpened but this area continues to require more focus. Vicki Setters as Deputy will be leading on improving practice in this area over the next year.

**Consistency of Behaviour Management** – the Inspectors felt that there were pockets where the Rewards and Relationship scheme was not fully understood or completely consistently implemented

Learning walks and reporting indicate that this area is much improved and I would be confident that the school represents a much more consistent approach.

**Behaviour Tracking** – The inspectors have asked us to develop a whole school consistent model for tracking behaviour

An effective tracking system is in place in all three secondary teams which will be developed further in the next term to include better reporting on behaviour in summary format

**Marking and Feedback** – The inspectors commented several times on the lack of marking and the lack of recording of verbal feedback.

Recent work scrutiny has again raised this as an issue and therefore greater work has been initiated. This will continue to be an area of focus in the coming months.

**Literacy** – The inspectors felt that we had made a good start on literacy but wanted to see a greater whole school focus on literacy.

This area requires additional work.

**Lesson Observation** – The inspectors felt that some senior leaders were too generous in their lesson observations.

As Exec Head I have undertaken Ofsted Inspector training and will be modelling good practice for XLT colleagues along with moderating judgements.

**Consistency** – The inspectors commented positively on the level of consistency between some bases but queried why not all bases were on the same structure.

As mentioned previously – this is now vastly improved and continues to grow.

### **Alternative Provision**

This is an area of our work which provides a constant source of pressure and challenge. Our school could not operate effectively without using alternative provision to provide the entitlement for many young people particularly at KS4. However this continues to be expensive. We continue to constantly track this issue to balance cost against the need to provide the statutory hours of provision and against the issue of quality and accreditation.

We have recently agreed with the local authority that the SSSFN quality assurance process will be recognised by them on their "HelpYouChoose" website. This is because the local authority no longer provides any quality assurance process themselves.

We have also recently moved away from the large contract we had in place this year with ACE. This proved to be very costly and although it gave us greater access to vocational provision for more students, has proven financially unsustainable in the budget. The contract with ACE is likely to reduce from £300k per year to nearer £90k. We have also created a forum for Alternative Provision partners to meet regularly so that we can share good practice amongst providers and improve collaborative working in the aim of driving up standards (and possibly driving down cost) Our Engagement Development Officer also works with all Alt Prov providers to ensure that we have good evidence of quality assurance and service level agreements in place.

**Items to Celebrate**

Academy Status  
Academy Status  
Academy Status

Des Reynolds  
May 2014