

SSSFN Executive Heads report to the Governing Body

November 2014

Student Data

Please see attached report on student attainment in Summer 2014

Budget Update

After much debate the final figure for the closing deficit of the non-Academy SSSFN was decided to be £416,323.00. This was settled by the EFA and we have now agreed a 36 month repayment plan of £11,564 per month from January 2015. A full budget revision has been undertaken to ensure this amount can be paid. Further cost saving proposals have also been prepared which will be considered by the Resources and Personnel committee.

Cash Flow

Due to careful planning by the finance team and the change to some payment terms with new supplier we are now in a healthy cash flow position for the coming 4 – 6 months.

Financial Monitoring Group

The financial monitoring group met for the first time in October and will now meet monthly to monitor progress against budget and the cash flow.

The Financial Monitoring Group is made up of

- Phil Harris
- Clive Evans
- Des Reynolds
- Vicki Setters
- Gill Wardlow

Staffing Issues

We continue to struggle with large amounts of staff absence. We have had several staff absent through close bereavements as well as a number of health issues. We also continue to have high short term absence through flu and similar illness.

However we have now advertised and are about to appoint a bank of classroom assistants to reduce the costs of supply cover. We have also made arrangements with two regular supply teachers to pay them directly and therefore avoid the costs of a supply agencies.

The new arrangements around requesting absence have bedded in reasonably well – but obviously have the potential for creating staff ill feeling

Capital Developments

We were successful in our bid for funding for works to a number of the SSSFN buildings. This means that in the spring a number of our sites will have reparation work completed – particularly around flat roof areas. This includes Rosebery, Pott Row and Earthsea as well as substantial works at DBS.

We are now preparing further bids for replacement windows on various sites as well as looking at the possibility of expanding the site at Earthsea by converting the current hall area which is used for storage. We are also trying to find a way of creating additional office space at Locksley and seeing whether this could be bid for

Child Support Team

The CST continues to be a source of some success with more schools signing up. Significantly this term we have had two further large secondary schools subscribe. This has led to further recruitment.

We are currently consulting with schools on whether there is a financial appetite for further development of the CST to produce an additional service targeted at Mental Health support. This is likely to be controversial as the LA was recently rejected in an

attempt to take £2million from school funding to set up a similar service. If responses look positive then full plans will be taken to R&P for consideration and risk planning

Compass West

The situation at Pott Row remains the same – however we are hopeful that Compass West will open in January.

Alternative Provision

In order to control the budget we are now working with Engagement Teams throughout the SSSFN to reduce the cost of alternative provision. This is being done by looking at alternative ways to provide provision such as Work Experience – but also by trying to move on students more swiftly at KS4. This latter item will cause significant issues for the LA due to their capacity to fund placements.

We are now preparing a detailed report on value for money within Alternative Provision and comparison methods for ranking and comparing alternative provision providers.

Creating Consistency

Consistency continues to improve across the school and recently new appointments for Secondary Leader posts have further enhanced this process.

Staff Wellbeing and CPD

We have recently issued this years Staff Wellbeing questionnaire. Results will be collated and submitted to the R&P committee later in the term. The Staff Forum meets for the term later this month as well to look at staff wellbeing.

It is my expectation that the Wellbeing Questionnaire and the Forum will both identify issues with staff wellbeing. This is likely to result from the current heavy focus on improving teaching and learning. Many colleagues have found the process of being challenged on their teaching practice very stressful and some feel that it is unnecessary or spiteful. Taken alongside the downward pressure on staff absence, the pressure on staff performance has undoubtedly made some colleagues consider their employment opportunities.

Sadly it is a reality that some colleagues have continued to feel that the SSSFN is not a school and therefore the standards and practices which are now common in mainstream schools do not apply to them. I have given a clear message that this is not the case and some colleagues may choose to leave because of that. Others colleagues may face appropriate support and capability procedures if they are unable to meet the standards we expect.

I also anticipate further complaints regarding the amount of training offered to staff.

So far this academic year

- All staff have had Safeguarding training
- All Staff are in the process of receiving specialist training in attachment theory
- Selected staff have been trained to deliver Literacy and Numeracy Catch up programmes
- Selected staff have received Family Support Process (FSP) training

Further training is planned in

- De-escalation and Restraint
- Teaching and Learning – especially for Instructors

As a result of the training supported last year – one instructor has now gained qualified teacher status and moved to a teaching post.

Improvement Planning

Attached with this report is the final version of the School Improvement plan.

This is now being monitored and Governors should seek to do similar.

We have had our first School Improvement Visit from our SIP Seb Gasse – this will continue throughout the year.

SSSCAT Updates

SSSCAT submitted three applications on 31st October and 1st November.

The first two were for funding from the Sponsor Capacity Fund and an application to become an Academy Sponsor. If successful this will bring in £75,000 to allow the SSSCAT to be reformed as the Engage Multi Academy Trust. This will then allow us to sponsor other Alternative Provision and Specialist environments. This may have some implications for the roles of some governors who have been or may be asked to service as directors on the new Trust. However the Governing Body will continue to exist with its powers largely unchanged. There may be some necessity for new Governors to be found. The third application was a bid to sponsor the new BESD Academy which NCC proposes to open in September 2016. If successful this will be the first New Academy (after the SSSFN) to be sponsored by the Engage Trust.

Educational Challenge Partner visit

NCC have commissioned a further visit from the Educational Challenge Partner – we are currently arranging dates for this

Quality of Provision

This term Vicki Setters has undertaken a large piece of work to review and redesign our quality assurance and self evaluation processes in line with the new expectation from Ofsted.

This has led to the creation of an internal review process which will see Vicki undertaking regular reviews of teams across the SSSFN throughout the year. These will inform our school development planning and self evaluation for the future.

One key item for Governors to note is that the changing expectations around what is “Good” pose a significant challenge to the SSSFN in maintaining our current Good grading.

A strong focus on Progress over time and extended time spent in lessons looking at books requires SSSFN staff to adapt their practice. It also means that the resistance to writing which is common for our students is a significant disadvantage.

As mentioned previously – the necessity to take a robust approach to the quality of teaching and learning in the school has had impact on staff wellbeing – however governors need to be aware of the potential impact of failing to address these issues.

Items to Celebrate

Capital Development Bid

Applications to become a sponsor for new BESD school

Improved Year 11 attainment

Des Reynolds
November 2014