

COTHAM SCHOOL
Meeting of the Academy Governing Body
Wednesday 25 March 2015
MINUTES OF MEETING

Governors Present:		
Jim Bowyer, PG (Chair)	Jo Feather CG	Lesley Spring, PG
Ed Carpenter, SG	Claire Grocott, PG	Malcolm Willis, Headteacher
Andrew Ellis, SG	Jeremy Krause, LA	David Yorath CG
In Attendance (non-voting)	Apologies	Governors in Post: 16/19
Svetlana Bajic-Raymond, Dep. Head KS4	David Brockington, Coop	Quorum = 6 (1/3 rounded up)
Geraldine Hill-Male, Dir. Performing Arts	David Winter, PG	AM = Associate Member
Absent:	Dora Alderson, CG	CG = Community Governor
Caroline Francis, SG	Sandra Fryer, CG	PG = Parent Governor
Sujitha Subramanian, PG	Helen Gordon, PG	SG = Staff Governor
	Christine Ansell, Dep. Head KS3	SMT = Senior Management Team
	Marian Curran, Dir. Post 16	
	Mel Sperring, Business Manager	

Item	Minutes of Meeting
1	Welcome, Apologies for Absence, declarations of interest and notification of AOB Apologies accepted.
2	Forum Update Forum update was circulated prior to the meeting. Minutes have not yet been circulated, but will be as soon as possible. Would be useful to have a summary from Governors about the issues they are currently working on. Website – we could produce a brief that takes in the views of the school's stakeholders. There is a lack of clarity among the Forum members of the process that Governors need to go through to agree things, such as budget planning etc. It is important to make sure we are using the time and expertise of all the volunteers involved in both the Governing Body and the Forum effectively. Suggested there could be a link Governor who is also a member of the Forum. Could links be built between relevant Governors and Forum constituencies? (e.g. Parent Governors linking with parent constituency) Q – What is the status of the annual planner? This is currently still a draft, but is underway.
3	Governing Body Make Up and links with The Forum Links with the Forum A paper was circulated prior to the meeting. There is a view that Forum members have fewer duties than the Governing Body. Some members of the Forum might disagree with this, but they do not have statutory duties in the same way that the Governing Body do. Proposal is to invite the Forum to choose members to attend committee meetings.

Qu – What would be the status of Forum members attending committees? JB is intending to discuss this with Chloe from Vizards in order to feed this back to the Forum.

There is a great deal of other work that Governors do in addition to FGB and Committee meetings. It would be useful to have a clearer idea of what both bodies do.

There is a huge range of experience of education and business management on the Forum.

Could produce a process map for how things are discussed and agreed. It is important to clarify how that includes feeding back to the Forum.

There would need to be agreement after committee meetings between Chair and Forum member on what is to be fed back to the Forum.

Qu – is it legal that non-Governors attend committee meetings? Yes, although this will need to be managed.

There will be issues discussed that will have a confidential aspect.

It will be very difficult to control what is taken out of the meeting with non-governors present. Staff may feel that they cannot be as open and honest as they currently are if there are additional people present.

Would not normally expect to discuss individual children or staff in committee meetings.

Parents used to be part of performance reviews, but these are now different and it could be difficult to manage this.

It will not work if it would make more work for the school and reduce the effectiveness of meetings.

Progress data brought to LWB should be fine to share with Forum members.

Agendas can be set and organised in a way that allows for confidential items to be discussed without Forum members present.

Qu - What about Governors attending the Forum? It is important that Governors should attend meetings. Meetings of constituencies are valuable.

Governors should continue to attend Forum meetings and relevant constituency meetings

Need to be clear about the role of Governors – are not there as representatives.

Governors attending constituency meetings would not need to act as representatives but could be collecting & providing feedback without compromising their role.

Approved JB to take the proposal for Forum Members to attend committees to the Forum.

Governing Body Make-Up

A paper was circulated by e-mail earlier today.

The DfE have required LA schools to reconstitute their Governing Bodies to ensure members have the skills required.

Having all elected members makes it difficult to recruit for particular skills.

Articles allow for co-options to fill skills gaps. Can also appoint as many Governors as we like to committees in order to have the relevant expertise. For any decision, the majority of members present need to be Governors.

We could use the skills audit to decide where there are gaps and look for people to fill the gaps. We could look to the Forum for these people.

Could explore the possibility of making the Forum as a whole able to elect or appoint Governing Body Members, potentially by becoming the sponsor of the Academy.

Qu – Forum is not currently not representative of the school community. It is important, that as well as having the skills needed, the group is representative of the whole school community. What are the Governing Body doing to encourage people from different backgrounds to join the Forum? At the last parent Governor elections, there were five parents interested and there is a member of the Alumni who is interested in becoming Governors. JB could approach some of those people to see whether they have the skills needed.

	<p>Qu – Does the paper mean we can open up community vacancies to other groups? We need to follow what the articles say. Could parents opt to be a member of the community constituency? The Governing Body can make the decision for someone to be in a different constituency.</p> <p>Qu – How does an alumni become a Governor? If they live within 3 miles, they could be community Governors. We could co-opt alumni members. They have the same status as other Governors except that they cannot vote on further co-options.</p> <p>JB and DY will discuss some ideas with Chloe Brunton from Veale Wasborough Vizards and consider how to move forward.</p>
4	<p>Governor Hub</p> <p>Leanne introduced Governor Hub and the key details. The system will allow for on-line storage of documents and an on-line calendar and for Governors to update their own information.</p> <p>The cost of the system is £150 per year.</p> <p>Agreed to subscribe to Governor Hub</p>
5	<p>Headteacher’s Report</p> <p>The report had been circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>MW highlighted the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report from Francis Blagburn - really pleased with the work he is doing, including around the relationship with the BBC. • Outdoor Education is now run by Sarah Pearson and this is moving on well. • Pg 9-10 now includes a specific report from Post-16. There is a very strong field of applications for year 12 in September 2015. It is important that the Full Governing Body are aware of what is happening in Post-16. <p>Qu about the relationships with universities. This is now broader and deeper than it has been.</p>
6	<p>Committee and other Reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Learning & Well-being – CG</i> Minutes have been circulated. CG summarised the discussions and highlighted the following: The presentation and discussion around British Values. CG is aware that a recent Ofsted at another school were asked about this topic. Would hope that British Values link to the Cooperative Values. • <i>Personnel and Training – DA</i> Minutes have been circulated. JK summarised the discussions. Highlighted items – are working with Bedminster Down, St Mary Redcliffe and the University of Bristol to ensure we are linked in with the Teacher Training process. Thanked Ali Goddard-Jones for her work on this. School runs a considerable programme of CPD for school staff as a whole. Work is being done on having this validated. Now need to make a link between skills of Governors, Governors training and links with school training. There is work to be done on linking training requests and available training. <p>Qu about the work with St Mary Redcliffe and the North Bristol Teaching & Learning Alliance – are they the same thing?</p> <p>No – they are different things. The work with St Mary Redcliffe is working on teacher training. Redland Green, Cotham and 8 primary schools are working together as part of the North Bristol Teaching & Learning Alliance to share good practice.</p>

	<p>Qu - Has there been any Governor involvement in this? Chairs have been invited</p> <p>Qu - Is there a conversation in that group about a Multi Academy Trust? Not at the moment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Finance Premises & General Purposes – SF</i> Minutes from 2 Feb have been circulated. JB raised the following issues: We have not yet heard whether the funding bid for the new classroom buildings has been approved. The work is now going to cost more than originally thought. If there are significant increases in costs, this will come back to FGB to be agreed. <p>Qu – is there a plan B if the buildings are not available? It is unlikely that there will be issues that are insurmountable. There is a plan B, but it is not good. Update on the situation at Stoke Lodge.</p> • <i>Audit Committee – DW</i> There is now an audit plan. This committee still needs new members. This will be something to be addressed when we look at filling vacancies. • <i>Appointments & Standards</i> Have not met.
8	<p>Minutes of last meetings 11 February 2015 Amendments - DY also volunteered for the Admissions working group. Otherwise agreed as correct.</p>
9	<p>Matters Arising and Action List JK would like to discuss with the Local Authority admissions, but would need a brief for what we would want to say. This could be discussed by the Admissions working group. Action – Leanne to coordinate for this group to meet It is the Schools Adjudicator that would police admissions issues. It is not clear whether schools can approach them.</p>
10	<p>Any Other Business Post-16 Admissions. There was a challenge to the admissions policy by a parent, which was upheld by the Adjudicator. The admissions policy had not been agreed by the Governing Body which was therefore invalid. Marian Curran has done significant work to produce an updated and legal Post 16 Admissions Policy for FGB approval. DY feels that, unless the admissions policy has changed, it would not need to be agreed again. Approved the Post-16 admissions policies for 2015 and 2016 Leader of the Cooperative Academy. GHM is retiring soon and this is to allow the possibility of her continuing in the role of developing the Coop Forum on a part-time basis. All to read a draft job description and refer any comments to DA to be discussed at the next P&T meeting. The next Forum meeting is Wednesday 6 May – JB and CG can attend.</p>

Meeting closed at 21:05

Next Meeting – 20 May 2015

Signed

Date

Initial: