

COTHAM SCHOOL

Meeting of the Academy Governing Body

Wednesday 14 October 2015

MINUTES OF MEETING

Governors Present:		
Dora Alderson, CG	Jo Butler, Headteacher	Claire Grocott, PG
Jim Bowyer, PG (Chair)	Jo Feather CG	Sujitha Subramanian, PG
David Brockington, Coop		David Winter, PG
In Attendance (non-voting)	Apologies	Governors in Post: 14/19
Christine Ansell, Dep. Head KS3	Jeremy Krause, LA	Quorum = 5 (1/3 rounded up)
Svetlana Bajic-Raymond, Dep. Head KS4	Sandra Fryer, CG	AM = Associate Member
	Andrew Ellis, SG	CG = Community Governor
	Ed Carpenter, SG	PG = Parent Governor
	Helen Gordon, PG	SG = Staff Governor
	Absent:	SLT = Senior Leadership Team
	David Yorath CG	

Item	Minutes of Meeting
1	<p>Welcome, Apologies for Absence, declarations of interest and notification of AOB</p> <p>Apologies accepted.</p>
2	<p>Role of the Forum</p> <p>Forum minutes and papers from the working group were circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>DB talked through the key issues from the paper. It was produced by members of the parent and staff constituencies, Gareth Edmunds and Ross Geoghegan.</p> <p>JB gave some background – this has arisen from an original proposal that Forum members attend Governor Committees.</p> <p>Since then, there have been further discussions in school and in the committees about how Forum members attending might work. Some of the discussions at committees are quite sensitive and / or confidential. Having looked at agendas, it became clear that there would be times when there would be very short sections of the meeting that Forum members could attend.</p> <p>JB has also started taking a brief report from Governors to the Forum, which has been well received.</p> <p>There was concern that the original proposal might blur boundaries between the Forum and the FGB.</p> <p>There was a working group meeting on 8 October. The proposal for Forum members to attend committees has been removed, while allowing for possible occasions where they might want to attend about particular issues, with the agreement of the relevant Chair.</p> <p>Q – What does point 1d mean? This was about matching the work of the Forum to that of Governors. This is for the Forum to discuss and decide.</p> <p>It does not seem sensible to have a Forum group for, for example, Personnel & Training.</p> <p>There needs to be clarity about the differences between the Forum and the Governing Body.</p> <p>FGB do not see the need for the Forum sub-groups to mirror the Committees.</p> <p>Query re point 3c. This is about how Forum members discuss the way decisions are reached – this is in relation to the workings of the Forum and its sub-groups. It needs to be clear that this does not</p>

	<p>override the school complaints procedure.</p> <p>This paper needs to be discussed at the Forum. It then needs to go back to the Coop working group to pull together all the discussions.</p> <p>There was a discussion around managing issues that might arise and clarity of communication.</p> <p>We need to be clear that the Governing Body has a responsibility to ensure that the Forum operates appropriately. This might require policies etc. to be put in place. The Coop working group could be the vehicle for doing this and ensuring communication between the two bodies is effective.</p> <p>The working group will need terms of reference in order to become a sub-committee.</p> <p>The Coop Working Group would be the exception in that Forum members would be part of this group and this can be written into the terms of reference.</p> <p>The idea was that the Head would only attend if invited, but this means that there is no consistent link with the Senior Leadership Team.</p> <p>The group currently consists of two Governors and two constituency reps.</p> <p>DW proposed DB as Chair for the Working Group. DB would prefer to be co-chair, with another Governor.</p> <p>Q – Would a Forum member be able to be a chair? If the terms of reference are agreed by Governors with this in it, as the group has a slightly different remit to the other Committees, this would be appropriate.</p> <p>JB suggested that an initial piece of work for the group would be to set up the Forum’s policies and procedures, especially around the way that communication between the two bodies will work.</p>
3	<p>MAT Update</p> <p>Have previously voted to create a MAT structure in order to be ready, should the opportunity arise. There is no structure formulated currently. It would be in our interests to do the work on that. Need to consider how the MAT structure would work with the Cooperative approach.</p> <p>Dr Willis was planning to apply to the Secretary of State to make sure we could become a MAT. This has not happened – there was some confusion about who would need to make that decision.</p> <p>David Carter is the Regional Educational Commissioner for the South West. There are now strict criteria for who can become a MAT. David Carter is willing to meet with the school to discuss his criteria. He has some key, challenging, questions that the Governing Body should discuss before going back to him.</p> <p>There was a discussion about the potential models of a MAT.</p> <p>DB will share a copy of the Cooperative MAT model.</p> <p>There is an offer from the Schools Cooperative Society for further advice on this.</p> <p>DB to send the correspondence from the SCS.</p> <p>MS / JBu to make contact with the SCS</p> <p>Make contact with David Carter after this.</p>
4	<p>Governor Away Day</p> <p>Date – from a school point of view, in relation to other meetings, the 21 November would be the best date. Agreed to arrange for 21 November.</p> <p>Agenda – can look at strategic priorities. Might be useful to do some of the Ofsted training that still needs to be done.</p> <p>There might also be feedback from the Schools Cooperative Society about MATs.</p> <p>JBu and JB to draw up an agenda.</p>

5	<p>Headteacher's Report</p> <p>The report was circulated shortly before the meeting. JBu talked through the key points.</p> <p>There is an end of term newsletter going out next week. This will give a flavour of the work that has been going on in the school.</p> <p>There has been some success with Modern Foreign Language remarks – there has been agreement that the cohort will be remarked.</p> <p>The HMI at the Ofsted briefing said they only want a SEF summary, not a detailed document.</p> <p>JBu has sent some notes with information from the Ofsted data to LS to forward to Governors.</p> <p>Query about the quiet reflection space for students – this is based partially on JBu's previous experience and a great deal of work done on this previously. It is important to be aware of where and when students are reflecting and praying and that this is appropriately supervised. Students have raised the desire to pray without having to find whatever space is available. The hall is now being used as a space for this.</p> <p>Query about how staff are reacting to the PREVENT agenda – is there a discussion among staff? Further training might be needed for staff.</p> <p>The PREVENT training was presented around children who are vulnerable and these children may be vulnerable in many situations. Children are treated as victims who are being groomed to be radicalised. No staff have had issues about the more open reflection space and the students have welcomed it. It is two – four students at present. Over 150 students said, in a poll, that they would use it. There might be issues with students feeling intimidated to go into the space – this is something that will need to be managed if it arises.</p> <p>Q – Are the names of the students using this being monitored? Not currently. To date only a small group of boys (2-4) using the facility. They do not communicate with each other but pray and then leave. In terms of monitoring their names are known.</p> <p>Q – Is there an issue with communication for those with a first language other than English? Yes, it is likely that there is. It is not practical to translate all documents that are sent out. We are quite reliant on children to translate as necessary. There are over 30 languages spoken in the school.</p> <p>Q – Is it possible to collect data on which parents struggle with reading English? This could be done. It might be something that the Forum could support the school with. There could be community volunteers who could facilitate dissemination of information.</p> <p>Comment that this is an excellent Head's report and JBu was thanked for this.</p> <p>Q – Does the weekly e-mail apply to Post 16 as well? This needs to be agreed across the whole centre, but ideally, yes.</p> <p>Q – Do we know how many parents don't have e-mail? It is about 15% that we do not have e-mail addresses for and are trying to chase this. If parents do not have access to e-mail, we will monitor this on a case by case basis. Every student now has a gmail account, so communications could be sent that way.</p> <p>There was a discussion about using text messages in a targeted way.</p> <p>Q – Will parents not be able to book a parent consultation other than on-line? Yes, that is the case, but any parent who has difficulties with this, they can contact the school and make an appointment by phone.</p> <p>This is something Learning & Wellbeing could potentially look at.</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. • <i>Personnel and Training – DA</i>

	<p>Minutes have been circulated. DA summarised the discussions. SS raised a query about the minutes. DA has seen this and the minutes will be amended.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Finance Premises & General Purposes – JB</i> Minutes from have been circulated. JB summarised the discussions. JB gave a further update around the work being done to meet the need for more secondary places in the near future. JBu will be meeting the LA soon about how Cotham might be involved in this. Need to remember that there is an issue with a number of staff members having to move classrooms during the day when considering any possible expansion. • <i>Coop Working Group</i> See discussion above. Also discussed possible areas for the Forum to work on and recruitment to FGB. Shortlisting has taken place for the Cooperative Development Worker and interviews will happen next week. There was considerable feeling about the potential for the Parents’ Constituency to lobby around the issue of Stoke Lodge. This could be very useful. The Working Group dates have been set and need to be added to the calendar. • <i>Audit Committee – DW</i> Have not met. • <i>Appointments & Standards</i> JK has met with LS, who updated. JK feels there are four key areas for the committee to look at: the Governors’ Code of Practice and whether this needs to be repeated regularly; the induction policy and process, including mentoring for new Governors; CPD for Governors and potential links with school and NW24 and elections and gaps in Governor expertise. The committee would meet as needed rather than setting regular meetings. JK suggested that two other Governors meet with him and LS on Tuesday 11 November before LWB. JF, DA and JB volunteered. • <i>Post 16</i> The first Steering Group meeting has happened. JB will bring an item to the away day or FGB to explain the new governance structure for the Post 16 Centre. A Complaints Procedure, Curriculum Policy and Policies Statement had been circulated for approval. Further discussion is needed on the Complaints policy – JB asked for e-mail comments and concerns. There was some discussion about the Curriculum Policy. JB will feedback and further discussion can happen at LWB. Q - Should there be a curriculum policy for the whole school? – the Governors’ Curriculum Statement is a Statutory requirement. JBu to follow this up and report back. There was a discussion around curriculum issues.
8	<p>Minutes of the last meetings – 9 September 2015 Agreed as correct.</p>
9	<p>Matters Arising and Action List See updated action list.</p>

	<p><i>Holding meetings earlier</i> – this needs to be considered carefully as an earlier start could potentially discriminate against mothers of young children. JBu and LS expressed a preference for an earlier start / finish.</p>
10	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p><i>Recruiting New Governors.</i></p> <p>There is one Parent vacancy, one Staff vacancy and three Community vacancies. It would be useful to recruit some new people onto the Governing Body and to increase the diversity.</p> <p>It is important to make people aware what the expected commitment and skills that we need. Advertisements and information that is sent out needs to reflect this. Need to get information out to people how they could become involved.</p> <p>Governors could put a note into the end of term newsletters, promoting the idea of being a Governor to parents and possibly their networks.</p> <p>A database could be kept of interested people and introductory training sessions could be offered.</p> <p>Agreed to move forward with elections.</p>

Meeting closed at 9.35pm

Next Meeting – Wednesday 9 December

Signed

Date