

COTHAM SCHOOL

Meeting of the Academy Governing Body

Wednesday 10 September 2014

MINUTES OF MEETING

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

Item	Minutes of Meeting
1.	Introduction, welcome, apologies for absence, declarations of interest and notification of AOB No Declaration of Business Interest No AOB notified.
2.	Elections for 2014-15 Chair (LS chaired) – Jim Bowyer was nominated by CG, seconded DY. Returned unopposed. JB took the chair and thanked DY for all his work over the last two years. Vice-chair – Sandra Fryer – nominated by DY, seconded DA. Returned unopposed Committee Chairs: Learning & Wellbeing – Claire Grocott - nominated by DY, seconded SF. Returned unopposed Personnel & Training – Dora Alderson - nominated by SF, seconded DW. Returned unopposed Finance, Property & General Purposes – Sandra Fryer - nominated by DY, seconded EC. Returned unopposed Appointment & Standards Committee – Lesley Spring - nominated by DA, seconded HG. Returned unopposed Audit Committee – David Winter - nominated by DA, seconded BG. Returned unopposed JB proposed that vice chairs for committees be elected in the committee meetings.
3.	Committee Membership DY had prepared a paper which he briefly went through. The structure was not reviewed in 2013/14. There was a discussion around the process for the Appeals Committee. DA chairs, but other members are appointed according to who is available on each occasion. DY feels that there should be names for the people in the three main committees to be clear about delegated powers. There were names in 2011, but this has not been renewed.

	<p>SF commented about the numbers of members in the committees and the difficulty in getting enough people to join. FPGP has recently been four governors plus staff.</p> <p>DY – numbers were based on making sure that everyone was on at least one committee. The paper also does not talk about quorum. The EFA guidance gives 2, but have usually worked on 3.</p> <p>LWB is usually 7-8 people. CG asked why LWB has more members – it covers SEN etc. and was formed from two previous committee</p> <p>DA - P&T usually has 5 members, but often they are not all there. DA saw the numbers as something to aim for to allow for other commitments. When she joined, all governors were expected to be on two committees which is no longer enforced. Expressed concerns about functioning effectively with fewer governors</p> <p>JK – all meetings are driven by tasks and suggested discussing what tasks need to be done and allocating people accordingly, taking into account skills etc.</p> <p>DW commented that the admissions committee does not appear on the table and there will also be a committee for the Post-16 centre. DW also feels that being on two committees is useful for governors in having an overview of the school's work.</p> <p>DY commented that we have never invoked the item in the articles that allow FGB to appoint people with appropriate skills to fill gaps.</p> <p>SF feels that it would be more realistic to say up to five members and consistently have close to that number.</p> <p>Helen felt that going on to sub-committee was very much left up to her, and it was never followed up. We need to be more forceful in asking new governors to choose committees. JB suggested being more directive when electing / appointing new governors.</p> <p>DA commented that the information going out previously, subcommittee meetings were not mentioned as necessary.</p> <p>GHM – Forum reps are also very keen to know how the sub groups operate and work and may be able to provide some support in terms of providing appropriate skills.</p> <p>SF said that the paper needs to reflect the discussion and the options for working with the Forum, in order to be clear for Ofsted. DY and JB to work on the paper to circulate before next meeting.</p> <p>MS / LS to distribute a list of committees and their membership. All to respond to say if they are still prepared to be on the committees they are listed for and to make sure everyone is on two groups.</p> <p>CG commented that a number of governors are on other sub-committees that are not part of the main structure and this needs to be taken into account.</p>
4.	<p>Co-operative Forum Update</p> <p>GHM handed out a paper summarising the priorities and key dates and briefly went through this. Working groups have evolved so that student groups are working on similar issues.</p> <p>The small group is meeting next Thursday and GHM will invite people. GHM asked that governors attend meetings if at all possible</p> <p>MS commented that the Forum AGM is on the same date as the FGB. DY – the AGM is of the Trust, which includes members of the Co-op. The accounts would be presented at 6.30pm followed by the celebration aspect. There is a risk that there will not be a FGB business meeting that term. JB to look at potential dates.</p>
5.	<p>Strategy Items</p> <p>2014 Examinations Update</p> <p>JB congratulated MW and the staff on the results this year and asked that MW pass this on to staff.</p>

The results will be discussed in much more detail at LWB.

Christine presented the KS3 results. This year 9 year group had a number of issues that impacted on their learning and quite large literacy issues. The targets were very high. 5 sub-levels is expected progress, 6 is better than expected. Have used the Fischer Family Trust for this year group. FFT D is top 25% of schools nationally. FFT B is expected progress. At level 5 the year group did exceptionally well. Students who are not at level 5 are unlikely to get to a grade C. Level 6 was still very close to the expected progress.

Cohort information. CA pointed out that averages can be deceiving, but this year had more students at the lower end and in the middle than previously. More students achieved level 5 and almost as many on level 6. These results are very positive and reflect the very hard work of the staff.

The year on year comparisons are difficult – base lines are different. E.g. there is no test for writing at KS2, but will be at KS3 & 4. This year group is larger than previous cohorts and has a different profile.

In order to reach our targets, we need to convert as many of the level 5s into A-C grades as possible. High performing pupil premium students achieved exactly the same as all the other high performing students.

DW commented that we seem to be saying that GCSE results will not improve in coming years. CA commented that there is a great deal of added value for these students, but we cannot achieve constant improvement as cohorts are very different.

The measures and standards of national examinations and the grading and other national standards are changing and in the future schools will be judged on pupils' performance in the 'traditional' subjects.

For KS3, there is no national curriculum levels data anymore so this is not being collected and will not be available in future. This has come from the idea that children self-level at the grade they are told they are and work towards how they can keep improving. CA has done a lot of work, we are staying with national curriculum levels tweaked to account for changes in KS2 and KS4. These are the new Cotham levels. Ofsted want to see that the curriculum and assessment have been modified for the new GCSEs. We will likely need to move away from levels as GCSEs will have numbered grades.

JB commented that Governors will need to understand the system the school is using.

SF asked if this needs to be a strategic item. MW feels that all governors need to understand how this is working.

CA commented that the literacy support has been extremely good. 61 children came in with a reading age below 9, the group has just been tested again but we do not yet have results.

Svetlana – proposed to look at detail in LWB at the GCSE results, so is discussing the headline figures here. To compare year on year results is difficult as not comparing like with like. Provisional GCSE results were handed out. SBR hopes that headline figures will go up, as some children will be discounted (i.e. those with English as a second language. Pointed out progress in English is good. Every issue from last year has been addressed and we have the progress – all students have made good progress which is as important as the 5A*-C with maths and English.

The gap between pupil premium and non-pupil premium has opened a little this year, now Pupil Premium students are compared to national non-pupil premium results – these gaps are very, very small.

In English the majority of those who did not make 3 levels of progress made at least 2 levels of progress and many of these are EAL students. Progress gaps have also closed for boys.

MW commented that we have just joined a group called pixel – Partners in Educational Excellence, paid for by BCC. MW was expecting them to say that the focus should be on high quality writing, which will be necessary for good results.

It is unlikely we will repeat this level of results in future years. MW feels that children have come back to school in a very positive frame of mind and, although there is hard work to be done, he is hopeful we can achieve well.

DW asked if the tale for pupil premium could be re-done with the national average figures - yes.

JK commented that the success of this group will have lessons for the future. Thanked SBR for the work she has done on this. Asked whether the Data Dashboard is still in use. It is in use, but SBR has not used it this year.

MW explained that by going to Ofsted website and searching for Cotham there is a link to the Data Dashboard, it shows a comparison of Cotham to 60 similar schools based on average grade point on entry but, having done the analysis, these schools are not similar to Cotham.

Post-16 – MW circulated a paper. MW drew attention to the summary of AS results for 2014. These have improved over the last three years. There has been a good deal of intervention with students which has helped to achieve this.

On A2 results – we achieved about a grade above the target for average point score per entry and are above target for average point score per student. Assessment and value-added data for AS and A2 will be available for LWB.

DW commented that Redland Green Centre seem to be performing better. MW commented that their average point scores would be needed to assess this. There is also a lot of teaching that happens across both sites. Marian can provide that information. MW said that there has been a debate about the prior achievement of students entering the Post-16 Centre and how they are placed in the two centres.

Governors' Self-Assessment JB reminded Governors to return these

6.

Committee Reports

Oral reports were given

Learning & Well-Being – JB work last year focussed on monitoring student progress, and this will likely continue to be a large focus. Also looked at items such as FGM, annual Safeguarding and SEN reports and heard about curriculum and PE requirements, which will be a future issue for FPGP & FGB

Personnel & Training – DA key focus on PRP policy for teaching staff and associated management and training issues. Also looked at staff training with a focus on initial teacher training now that there is more of a focus on in-house training. Hoping to be part of a cluster of schools. Also have regular staffing updates. Finished a two year review of all main HR policies which needed to be customised for Cotham now it is an Academy. For next year, priorities will be looking PRP and seeing how that works in practice, ITT issues and policy reviews.

Finance, Property & General Purposes – SF, have put together a balanced budget for this year, but this will be increasingly difficult to balance in future years, especially having pared back the IT budget. Buildings – have been working on feasibility and have appointed a project team to take forward the design and build of four new classrooms and an all-weather pitch.

Caroline Francis asked how the village green application is going. SF said that we need to decide how we will respond when we see the report.

Appointments & Standards Committee – LS have discussed elections for Community Governors, reviewed the Terms of Reference and have started looking at training for Governors to formalise and record it better. DY commented that this would be important on the basis of the Self-assessment forms he has seen. SF commented that we had discussed having a conference.

	<p>JK commented that the training around PRP is important. Only four people have responded so far.</p> <p>Audit Committee – DW will continue to receive reports from the internal auditor, beginning with looking at his schedule and the frequency of review. Have spent time looking at data for the pupil premium and now feel there is a better understanding of this. Have also been looking at the activities funded by pupil premium and DW feels it might be worth trying to look at the interventions and outcomes achieved. DW also asked Governors for suggestions about areas of efficiency in school to be discussed by the committee.</p>
7.	<p>Minutes of July Meeting</p> <p>DW had requested a change to the Audit Committee report. This was agreed.</p> <p>DY – pg1 - the number of Governors in post should be 16/19</p> <p>BG - Query pg2 – Jeremy Krause was impressed by... the quality and depth of discussion and the quality of members of the Forum.</p> <p>DA – pg5 should have said minutes of LWB and FPGP to be circulated. DA asked any progress with PRP training dates. (LWB reported back on the predicted student outcomes. Staff highlighted that the profiles of students on intake to the school over the last few years has varied</p> <p>LS to chase members to send corrections to the minutes – assume sorted up to when Jim started speaking!</p>
8.	<p>Matters Arising and Actions</p> <p>A separate action list has been circulated.</p> <p>SF</p> <p>Away day – to try to arrange before half-term – a Saturday morning 9am to 1pm. Post-16 is a good venue. LS to liaise with JB on dates etc. JB asked for any suggestions for the agenda.</p> <p>JB asked MW for a list of bullet points from learning walks for Ofsted.</p>
9.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Recruitment of Headteacher. SF has a proposed timescale</p> <p>3 key dates when teachers can resign – Dec, Jan, Apr. A caring employee would want to give good notice of leaving. Feels we should be able to get ready before Christmas and do recruitment in new year.</p> <p>Key issue is building enough time for everyone who needs to be consulted.</p> <p>SF asked the FGB to agree that, having received the resignation of Headteacher, agree spend up to £20,000 (this is the level that FPGP can authorise with 3 quotes) – this was agreed (JB / DA)</p> <p>JK would prefer to interview before Christmas as for the head of an outstanding school tend to get less applicants as we may need time to have a second round of interviews. In order to attract teachers from outside the immediate area, we may need to consider offering a package including relocation costs etc.</p> <p>JB proposed the chairs of committees, JB & vice chairs form a working group with the option to invite other members as needed – agreed. Will share proposals when they have them. Would hope to make good progress by next FGB.</p> <p>JB asked anyone who had experience of this process to let him know if they can help</p> <p>SF – likely the approach will be a mixture of approaches including advert and possibly, 'head hunting'.</p> <p>There was a discussion around the potential methods of recruitment and timescales. Inc. headhunting and the potential issues around using a head-hunter. Using recruitment co.</p> <p>CF Asked MW advice re timescales – suggested getting in a round of interviews before Christmas, package is important – consider salary and package</p> <p>JK commented on a situation where Governors had become involved in discussion with potential candidates and this must not happen.</p>

SF – need to be very clear about what we want the new Head to do. Head-hunters can contact people who want to discuss with governors about applying.

DW raised the issue of consultation and that will need to be an early job. DW – issue with recruiting people to come to Bristol is house prices, so may need to consider the package.

Will share more concrete proposals via e-mail.

Next meeting 22 October.

Meeting closed 21:40

Signed:

Date: