

COTHAM SCHOOL

Meeting of the Academy Governing Body

Wednesday 15 July 2015

MINUTES OF MEETING

Governors Present:		
Dora Alderson, CG	Sandra Fryer, CG	Jeremy Krause, LA
Jim Bowyer, PG (Chair)	Claire Grocott, PG	Sujitha Subramanian, PG
David Brockington, Coop	Andrew Ellis, SG	Malcolm Willis, Headteacher
		David Winter, PG
In Attendance (non-voting)	Apologies	Governors in Post: 15/19
Leanne Sowersby, Clerk	Caroline Francis, SG	Quorum = 5 (1/3 rounded up)
Christine Ansell, Dep. Head KS3	Helen Gordon, PG	AM = Associate Member
Svetlana Bajic-Raymond,	David Yorath CG	CG = Community Governor
Dep. Head KS4	Jo Feather CG	PG = Parent Governor
Gareth Edmonds, Parent Forum Rep	Ed Carpenter, SG	SG = Staff Governor
Mel Sperring, Business Manager	Absent:	SMT = Senior Management Team

Item	Minutes of Meeting
1	<p>Welcome, Apologies for Absence, declarations of interest and notification of AOB</p> <p>Apologies accepted.</p>
2	<p>Forum Update</p> <p>Gareth Edmonds, a parent rep, gave an update to the Forum.</p> <p>Focussed on one of the key issues for the Forum, which is the need to find ways in which The Forum can work more closely with the Governors. There are two elements – one that The Forum brings issues raised by their membership to the Governors, which has been happening, although not always as quickly as it might.</p> <p>The other element is to provide an opportunity for consultation from the Governors (in the first line of the Terms of Reference) which is not perhaps working as well as it could.</p> <p>Felt that the suggestion that Forum Members should work with the Committees should be taken up.</p> <p>Forum agreed to form a small working group to look at how this could work better. GE met with Ross Geoghegan to consider some ideas. They have produced a very first draft and would like to circulate to the Forum and key Governors with a view to presenting some proposals next year.</p> <p>Governors in agreement to form a working group. JB, CG, DB and DW volunteered.</p> <p>LS to pass contact details to GE</p> <p>The coop working group have produced a document about what the Cooperative Forum have achieved. DB talked through the key points.</p> <p>DB highlighted the ongoing focus section. Want agreement that there will be ongoing support for the Forum in the light of GHM, KH and FG leaving.</p> <p>An internal advert is being drafted now and will go out this week. Should be able to appoint very early in the year. The post will be one day per week with a salary of approx. £37,000 p.a. (pro-rata). Spend is about £9000 per year with on-costs, which will reflect the responsibilities of the post.</p>

	<p>Q – If someone internal applied who is a full-time teacher how would that work? This would need to fit around an existing role and it would not be appropriate to reduce teaching hours to accommodate it.</p> <p>GE and DB were thanked for their work.</p>
3	<p>Budget 2015-16</p> <p>Papers were circulated in advance. MS and SLT have worked very hard to get to a balanced budget – JB thanked them for that.</p> <p>MS talked through the key points.</p> <p>MS has produced forecast for future years, when it will be very difficult to maintain a balanced budget.</p> <p>This has been through FPGP. SF also thanked MS for all the work having been done and recommended that Governors approve the budget.</p> <p>Will need to do some work on the ongoing budget as well as capital spend.</p> <p>Q – The capital budget includes replacement of ICT – is there any provision in this budget? No, there needs to be a conversation about this in the future.</p> <p><i>Andrew Ellis joined the meeting</i></p> <p>Q – How will teaching space be resolved? This has been resolved for this year, but will need to be looked at, along with potentially the curriculum and timetable, in the future.</p> <p>Discussion around the process of drafting the budget and how the budget has been brought into balance. Part of the reduction has come from some experienced staff leaving. On the basis of the information MS has now, we will not be able to manage a balanced budget. This may change over of the year but it gives an indication of the risk.</p> <p>The 2015-2016 budget was approved unanimously</p>
4	<p>Admissions Consultation</p> <p>Papers had been circulated in advance. CG talked through the key points.</p> <p>CA thinks it would be a good idea to manage our own in-year admissions. SLT will need to discuss this with Jo when she arrives with regard to the amount of work involved etc. The whole thing will need to be looked at again if we consider becoming a MAT. In year admissions can be managed to ensure that the school stays full.</p> <p>Agreed to amend the point at the school to the front door.</p> <p>Q – How far can we diverge from the Local Authority admissions criteria? We can diverge as long as we meet the requirements of the funding agreement.</p> <p>Q – How are children with Statements of Special Educational Needs catered for? They are not subject to the general admission arrangements and would be given the place.</p> <p>There was further discussion about the possibility of managing in-year admissions.</p> <p>Approved documents to move forward with the consultation</p>
5	<p>Concerns and Complaints Policy</p> <p>JK summarised some issues that have arisen with the guidance around Stage 3 of the complaints process, as well as possibly the policy itself.</p> <p>JK asked for two Governors to work on this before the next P&T meeting. Have had advice from the school solicitor about what needs to be changed. SF and DA volunteered.</p> <p>Agreed that the policy should be looked at by all committees.</p> <p>JK to set up a meeting early in September.</p> <p>MW and MS were thanked for their work on this.</p>

6	<p>Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Policy</p> <p>The policy was circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Have achieved an Employability Charter Mark in June and in the last week, reached stage 3 in the Investors in Careers Award.</p> <p>Thanked Thelma Weaden and John Heayberd.</p> <p>There were some excellent comments from students about the support they have received.</p> <p>Q – Is any more input needed from Governors? There need to be some consideration of the funding and resourcing of this. Also need to recognise all the various ways in which this is being achieved.</p> <p>Q – How much are the Forum being involved? Alumni are key in this. There is a role for the Forum to engage with this. Parents and community members could also have a role in raising aspirations.</p> <p>Governors approved the Careers Education, Information, Advice & Guidance Policy.</p>
7	<p>Redundancy Policy</p> <p>MW circulated an update. Has been able to complete the consultation on this. Highlighted sections in the update were added at the request of the professional associations.</p> <p>It was then circulated to the whole staff group and questions were taken from staff, which were all answered.</p> <p>JB thanked MW for completing this.</p> <p>Q – Is redundancy pay usually based on the age of the person? Yes – that is the statutory redundancy provision. We have only changed it by removing the cap.</p> <p>Q – How often should this be reviewed? It would have to be reviewed annually to ensure we comply with legislation. Agreed to review formally each year.</p> <p>MS will add this to the policy</p> <p>It would be reviewed by Personnel and Training and/or Finance, Premises and General Purposes depending on what needs to change.</p> <p>Governors approved the Redundancy Policy.</p>
8	<p>School Forum Election</p> <p>Papers were circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Agreed to vote for David Yorath. LS to respond.</p>
9	<p>Governor Vacancies</p> <p>Lesley Spring has resigned.</p> <p>There is an alumnus interested in becoming a Governor. LS has asked him to complete a skills audit. LS to check guidance for the process needed to appoint as a Community Governor.</p> <p>Also need to consider the skills of the Governing Body as well as the diversity.</p> <p>There needs to be a discussion about the committees needed. There is no longer a requirement to have an Audit Committee.</p> <p>There has also been some discussion about the number of people involved in Appointments and Standards. Much of the work is falling on a few people.</p> <p>LS to start an electronic discussion detailing the existing committees, what they do, the range of skills needed and issues for the future.</p> <p>Q – Is the current Governing Body sufficiently diverse? No – we could look at making a plan to improve this. There are issues around the language used in documents sent out to encourage</p>

	<p>people to become Governors. Need to look at succession planning and alternative ways of doing things.</p> <p><i>David Yorath joined the meeting.</i></p>
10	<p>Risk Register</p> <p>A paper was circulated prior to the meeting. The register on the SLT agenda every week. There is a formal review in June every year.</p> <p>Risks that need specific monitoring were listed in a separate table. MS talked through the key points. Thanked school for having a comprehensive risk register and procedure in place.</p> <p>If there is a risk of low staff morale, we need to do what we can to address this as early as possible. This is primarily around external factors.</p> <p>There is another element around the budget and the potential for cuts to support staff and changes to roles, teacher contact time / class sizes etc. These are internal factors and could have a significant impact on staff morale. There is some uncertainty around there being a new Headteacher.</p> <p>Discussion around ways to manage this. It is important that it is done in as open and transparent a way as possible and that all staff are treated as equally as possible.</p> <p>Discussion around the requirements for Parent Governors and the information sent. Need to ensure that parents are aware of the commitment required.</p> <p>Risk around information not being clear – control measure needs to be changed to include all managers and all information.</p>
11	<p>Emergency Plan – this is not yet finalised and will need to come back next year.</p>
12	<p>Headteacher's Report</p> <p>Circulated prior to the meeting. MW talked through the key points.</p> <p>Outcomes are looking really solid.</p> <p>Sports day today – more students took part than in other years and this was a successful day. MW is very proud of the students this year.</p> <p>MW has also enjoyed the participation of the students in the Cooperative Forum. It is a good example of British Values and democracy in action. Turnout to vote for student reps is over 80%</p> <p>MW reiterated the concerns about staff morale. It has been a difficult year and they have done very well. Staff give a huge amount to the school.</p> <p>Overall feels it has been a good year.</p> <p>Governors thanked MW for this final report and all the work that has gone before it.</p> <p>Discussion about the new House System. This has come through the students via The Forum and a great deal of work has gone into this.</p> <p>Need to make sure that the House System and the pastoral care system work well together. The House system works alongside the pastoral structure of the school and MW feels it enhances it.</p>
13	<p>Committee and other Reports</p> <p>Draft minutes were circulated and Governors asked to direct questions to Chairs prior to the meeting – no verbal update. There were no questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Learning & Well-being – CG</i> • <i>Personnel and Training – DA</i> • <i>Finance Premises & General Purposes – SF</i> • <i>Audit Committee – DW</i> • <i>Appointments & Standards</i>

14	<p>Minutes of last meetings 20 May 2015 – Agreed as correct.</p>
15	<p>Matters Arising and Action List MAT – JB gave an update. Some questions have gone to Mervyn for feedback. Hope to start discussions with Colston’s school about working more closely together. They have appointed a new Headteacher who starts in January. Next steps – look at a business case, which would be started in the Autumn with Jo. Also to explore with the LA about the possibilities. Look to set up a meeting in either August or September following the response from Mervyn. Sf detailed the next actions.</p>
16	<p>Dates for next year Some concerns about the spacing of meetings to allow for holidays. Committee Chairs to consider with their members.</p>
17	<p>Any Other Business - None</p>

Meeting closed at 8.30

Next Meeting – Wednesday 9 September 2015

Signed

Date