

## COTHAM SCHOOL

### Meeting of the Academy Governing Body

Wednesday 11 December 2019

#### MINUTES OF MEETING

<b>Governors Present:</b>		
Dora Alderson, CG	Claire Burston, Co-opted	Delroy Hibbert, CG
Jack Barber, SG	Ed Carpenter, SG	Lucy Hunt, PG
John Bass, PG	Jane Chamberlin, PG	Morag Pirie, SG
Jim Bowyer, LA (Chair)	Jo Feather PG	David Yorath CG
Jo Butler, Headteacher	Sandra Fryer, Co-opted	
<b>In Attendance</b> (non-voting) Allison Crossland, Business Manager Chris Reed, Deputy Headteacher	<b>Apologies</b>  <b>Absent:</b>	Governors in Post: 14/19 Quorum = 5 (1/3 rounded up) CG = Community Governor PG = Parent Governor SG = Staff Governor

Item	Minutes of Meeting
1	<b>Welcome, Apologies for Absence, declarations of interest and notification of AOB</b> No apologies.
2	<b>Annual Report &amp; Accounts Sign-off</b> AC talked through the key points. David Butler from Bishop Fleming attended the FPGP meeting to talk through the accounts and the audit. The audit was clean and there were no issues. AC talked through the figures from the summary sheet. Discussion around the pension deficit figure increase and how this is calculated. <b>AC to send the actuarial report to DY</b> Governors thanked the school for the work on managing the budget and the outturn. Discussion around the possibility of using reserves to invest. <b>Q – Why does the report only list two of the committees?</b> This is the template that has been used in previous years. <b>To add the additional committees / ensure the report is consistent in future.</b> <b>Annual Report and Accounts Approved</b>
3	<b>Agree Admissions Arrangements</b> LS explained that the Local Authority have asked for the location in the school to which distance is measured to be, 'a central point within the main school building'. JBU explained the process of agreeing the admissions process and how much control the school, as an academy, has over this. Discussion around Cotham's catchment area and how the application process works. <b>Q – Do we publish a map of where our students come from?</b> This is something we could do. We currently only have the number of applications for the next Year 7 intake and no further information about them. Discussion about what information would be useful to share. <b>Admissions Arrangements approved.</b>

	<p>Discussion around the possibility of changing the designated area of priority. JBU feels there are ethical issues around potentially disadvantaging other schools in order to try to gain advantage for Cotham. The diversity of the school is a strength, which attracts parents and staff.</p> <p>If there was any desire to change the arrangements, this would be a significant decision and would have significant impacts and would require a separate meeting. Governors did not feel this was necessary</p>
4	<p><b>SEND Information Report</b></p> <p>JF commented that not many schools have such a thorough, detailed report and thanked DL / JC for this.</p> <p><b>SEND Report Approved.</b></p>
5	<p><b>Child Protection &amp; Safeguarding Policy - Policy Approved</b></p>
6	<p><b>Premises Update</b></p> <p>The supreme court has handed down judgement on two legal cases to say there is statutory incompatibility between school playing fields and town and village green status.</p> <p>Met with police and area inspector, who advised that we should seek a multi agency agreement with the Council.</p> <p>School are putting two Condition Improvement Fund bids in. Have been advised to put in a new application for funding for refurbishment of the pavilion, alongside the change in use application.</p> <p>Also applying to refurbish some toilets that are not currently in use.</p>
7	<p><b>Headteacher's Report</b></p> <p><b>Query re the ambitious outcomes</b> - these are aspirational and are what we would achieve if all of our students achieved their target grades.</p> <p><b>Q – Who is the Designated Mental Health Lead?</b> Emma Shepherd, who has recently joined the school. She will also take on a significant part of the workload around safeguarding and a range of other things.</p> <p><b>Q – Is Drama at Post 16 coming back to Cotham next year?</b> We will do a BTEC – it rotates.</p> <p><b>Q – Were all the curriculum changes approved at LWB?</b> Yes. We are moving to BTEC for Drama as this will suit our students better, being much more practical.</p> <p>Psychology – we are finding is very challenging for our students and the outcomes have not been as good as we had hoped. There is a very diverse mix if students taking psychology and sociology. Sociology at GCSE is very good at developing students' cultural capital. Post 16 Sociology teachers have noticed a wide gap in cultural, social and political knowledge and understanding between our more advantaged and disadvantaged students and this hopes to address that.</p> <p>For MFL, there will still be three languages for this year, although this may be a carousel or a split into three. There are arguments for both. School has more teachers able to teach German than Spanish, German is less popular. We will need to look at the languages that are taught in the future and this will depend partly on the staff.</p> <p><b>Q – How many GCSE German students do we have?</b> We currently have about 80 doing German and 80 doing French in Year 11, and only about 50 doing languages at all in Year 10.</p> <p>Fairfield have done similar, but have a better uptake for languages, mostly French and Spanish. Are hoping to increase the uptake of languages. There will be a review of MFL and any decisions will come back to LWB.</p> <p><b>Q – What does, 'Visit local schools with similar contexts to discuss curriculum' mean?</b> Heads have agreed to share GCSE results and practice across schools. Similar contexts means a similar intake / pupil premium / SEND profile etc.</p>

**Q – Have we ever considered an enrichment afternoon like those done at RGS?** It would mean less hours for the subjects. The only other option would be to direct staff for more teaching time. DL has seen it done very badly – it has to be really carefully thought out and planned.

SLT are going out to other schools and looking at good practice to see what could be implemented successfully at Cotham.

Governors commented that it is positive that the careers work is moving well and is very positive. Work with alumni will be important.

**Q - The simplified behaviour procedures are very interesting and appear positive – has this started?** This has not started yet, there is a plan in place. More has been done on rewards. The aim is to start to get beneath the data and try to do more to intervene earlier and prevent repeated high level sanctions. The proposals need to be talked through in detail with the extended leadership team. There is a plan to pilot the new procedures.

**Q – Do we know anything more about the first choice school increase?** Only Numbers

**Q – Have the Post 16 applications gone up?** It's about the same. Our own students tend to be quite slow to apply, so we have been interviewing all Year 11 students. This is now started earlier than it used to be, there will be further rounds of recruitment.

Many students have applied for St Brendan's or City of Bristol, often because they offer courses or facilities that we do not, such as law or criminology. As specialist post 16 providers, often their entry requirements are lower. All of our students are offered a place at North Bristol Post 16. Many do decide to stay later in the year. Discussion around the ability to A-levels vs BTEC and the courses on offer.

**Q – Student outcomes have dropped 16%?** This was discussed at LWB. The progress measure was still close to national average – the cohort started at a lower level. The lower attainment was expected.

**Q – Why are exclusions so high in Bristol generally?** Bristol has one of the worst attendance in the country, the highest fixed term exclusion rates in the country and is officially the most segregated city and has the highest level of undiagnosed SEND. Cotham is in the highest quintile for SEND but the lowest for EHCPs. There is an issue in Bristol with moderate learning difficulties not being diagnosed.

Students with SEND and BME students are often disproportionately excluded nationally.

There is a lack of suitable, affordable alternative provision for students who struggle in mainstream school.

Contextual safeguarding is also in crisis, social services are not able to take referrals due to a lack of capacity.

School have to contract a private Educational Psychologist as the Local Authority has withdrawn all but statutory provision. There is a currently a backlog of EHCP applications, as there is a shortage of Educational Psychologists.

**Q – Does the new Director of Children's Services include Education and Social Services?** Yes

Governors noted that the school's performance in the context of the city is good.

Concern was expressed about primary schools and whether future partnership working could provide more support. There is a need for primary schools to provide better information.

**Q – Who is the site supervisor leaving at Christmas?** This is one of the site assistants who is moving on to a different role. Instead of recruiting a more senior person to the role, the plan is to use the money saved to pay an allowance for evening work.

**Q – What is the plan for Post 16 catering?** The hope is to offer something more appealing to post 16 students, possibly available for more of the day. This will be included in the tenders from prospective suppliers.

It would be useful to sharpen up the fundraising information going out in the weekly mailing and make it easier to access the information.

	<p><b>Q – Have we not just had new accounting software?</b> No, that was budget software, this is about paying the bills etc.</p> <p>Requested a section in the next update about the environment and climate change etc. DL has been involved in a project around this, which she can share more information on at the next meeting.</p>
8	<p><b>Link Visits</b></p> <p>Link Visit reports will go back to committees.</p> <p>JBo thanked staff who have facilitated visits and Governors who have made visits.</p> <p>If visits need to be reported to a committee that a Governor does not normally attend, the report can be shared on GovernorHub and questions asked via the committee.</p> <p><b>List of Link Visits to be uploaded to GovernorHub - LS</b></p>
9	<p><b>Committee and other Reports</b></p> <p>Minutes from all committees have been circulated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Learning &amp; Well-being – CG</i></li> <li>● <i>Personnel and Training – DA</i></li> <li>● <i>Finance Premises &amp; General Purposes – SF</i></li> </ul> <p>Minutes from have been circulated.</p> <p>Pay Award 2019 – JBo advised that a 2.75% pay rise was agreed across all teachers' grades.</p> <p>ICT Proposal</p> <p><b>Q – Could we be considering cloud servers?</b> This is not cost effective for the amount of data we have. This would cost around £60,000 per year, and would need a better internet connection etc.</p> <p><b>Q – What are the laptops for?</b> Most departments have a laptop trolley they can use in classrooms – the dedicated ICT rooms would not be sufficient for these needs.</p> <p><b>Q – Is there any funding available for this?</b> AC will be looking into this</p> <p>Q – Are we in any procurement groups? EC and AC have looked at this, but it was not helpful and school could only join at certain times. Prices were not better than other methods.</p> <p><b>To look at other available procurement groups and report to FGP</b></p> <p>Query about whether the depreciation policy should be longer than five years – <b>AC will discuss this with Bishop Fleming.</b></p> <p><b>ICT Proposal Approved</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Appointments &amp; Standards – JF</i></li> </ul> <p>JF flagged that there is still action needed around the Articles of Association and the Community Constituency. Discussion around this. DfE approval is required for amending the Articles. A working group, including SF, JF and DY to progress this.</p> <p>Governance Review – There is a need to review the effectiveness of the Chair. JBo proposed to carry out the current Parent Elections then to look at where we are in terms of skills gaps etc.</p> <p>There was also some discussion around training and each Governor having a responsibility for that themselves.</p> <p>Chairs were tasked with arranging conversations with individual Governors. There is a sheet of questions on GovernorHub that can be used. Ideally these would be completed by the next A&amp;S meeting on 28 January.</p>

	<p><b>Recipients of the conversation to feedback brief notes to JF and LS.</b></p> <p><b>JBu requested that the actions from the review be put together into an action plan.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Remuneration – Jbo</i></li> </ul> <p>JBo fed back. LH and JBo sampled a range of appraisal review of teachers at every career stage as well as leaders. JBo found this the most accessible process he has been involved in. Also commented on a marked improvement in the reflective comments from the staff taking part, both appraisers and appraisees.</p> <p>Approved all the recommendations for pay progression brought by SLT.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Joint Staff &amp; Governors - SF</i></li> </ul> <p>There has been no meeting since the last FGB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Post 16 – LH</i></li> </ul> <p>LH fed back. Discussion around work experience and how this works.</p> <p><b>Co-Chairs of Learning and Wellbeing.</b> Discussed the best way to have Co-Chairs of a committee.</p> <p><b>Agreed to amend the terms of reference to refer to election of Chair of Co-Chairs for committees only.</b></p> <p><b>To discuss the possibility of having Co-Chairs for the Full Governing Body at Appointments and Standards.</b></p>
10	<p><b>Minutes of last meetings</b> – Agreed as correct.</p>
11	<p><b>Matters Arising and Action List</b> – See Actions Report</p> <p>Members – Bronwen Lewis has agreed to become a Member. <b>Bronwen Lewis Approved as a Member.</b></p>
12	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p><b>PR for the school</b> – Discussion around the difficulties in communicating good news about the school, as opposed to less positive news. Discussion around this. There has been a suggestion to retain some press / PR expertise. <b>Further discussion to happen at FPGP</b></p>

**Meeting closed at 21:00**

**Next Meeting – Thursday 2 April 2020, 6pm**

**Signed**

**Date**

Initials: