

COTHAM SCHOOL

Meeting of the Academy Governing Body

Wednesday 18 May 2016

MINUTES OF MEETING

Governors Present:		
Dora Alderson, CG	Jo Butler, Headteacher	Claire Grocott, PG
John Bass, PG	Ed Carpenter, SG	Delroy Hibbert, CG
Jim Bowyer, PG (Chair)	Andrew Ellis, SG	Jeremy Krause, LA
Paula Bradshaw, PG	Jo Feather CG (<i>arrived at 8pm</i>)	David Winter, PG
David Brockington, Coop	Sandra Fryer, CG	
In Attendance (non-voting) Christine Ansell, Dep. Head KS3 Svetlana Bajic-Raymond, Dep. Head KS4 Marian Curran, Dir. Post 16 Mel Sperring, Business Manager Christine Bayliss, PRIMA Trust Sally Thomas, PRIMA Trust	Apologies Helen Gordon, PG David Yorath CG Absent:	Governors in Post: 16/19 Quorum = 5 (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	Welcome, Apologies for Absence, declarations of interest and notification of AOB Apologies accepted. JB welcomed everyone to the meeting. Everyone introduced themselves.
2	PRIMA Presentation and Questions Christine Bayliss from PRIMA gave a presentation. Slides were circulated before the meeting. Q – How would primary schools be brought in to this? Primaries (or any school) could be brought in at the start or at any time later on. The DfE would assess the MAT's ability to take on new schools to avoid a MAT growing too large too quickly. Governance arrangements would need to change at five schools – would need to cluster schools to enable proper performance management of the Headteachers. One local trust has 23 schools. There are many opportunities for staff to move around the schools in the trust to allow for progression. Q – What is the business growth model / what is economically sustainable? David Carter uses the benchmark of 3000 pupils as the point at which MATs can really start to develop and innovate. Those challenges will be present whether we work with PRIMA or not. David Carter is also very clear about the dangers of rapid growth. We are being presented with opportunities to shape the vision for a MAT. Q – Where does the responsibility for buildings, premises and development sit? How would the top-slicing of the budgets work? Those decisions will be for Cotham to make as the lead school.

	<p>CB has committed to, 'bow out' once the MAT is set up. PRIMA are providing a structure in which Cotham could take forward the trust.</p> <p>PRIMA were very choosy about which schools they talked to and feel that there is a good match in values etc.</p> <p>The Board of Trustees would be the strategic management body of the trust.</p> <p>JK declared having worked for Best Practice Foundation between 2011 and 2014</p> <p>Q – Is the trust focussed on teacher development? Yes, the focus is on learning communities. Developing people is key to ensuring good outcomes for students.</p> <p>Like many schools, Cotham have begun to have difficulties recruiting to some posts. Other schools are really struggling.</p> <p>With additional expertise, Cotham could have a great deal to offer other schools, including primary schools.</p> <p>Cooperative values should mean looking outward into the community and supporting the system.</p> <p>In the White Horse Trust, there is some staff transition between primary and secondary schools. Being a cross-phase MAT means that work, for example with Pupil Premium students, can be coordinated across primary and secondary.</p> <p>Q – What are the real benefits for pupil achievement in the White Horse Trust? They have taken on Gloucester Academy which has improved rapidly. There are other schools that have improved within the trust.</p> <p>Query about the draft scheme of delegation – How much independence is there for schools? There would need to be broad principles for behaviour, for example, which then need to be implemented in schools as appropriate – the detail would be done at Local Governing Body level.</p> <p>Another example would be admissions. There would be a Trust-wide set of principles around admissions, which would then be operated at Local Governing Body level within the overall sett of principles.</p> <p>Q – Are the numbers on the structure diagram fixed? No, this would be discussed.</p> <p>Q – Would Cotham retain the Cooperative Articles? No, the Articles would need to be changed. CB does not think that the Cooperative Articles would work as they stand.</p> <p>Q – What kind of company would the trust be?</p> <p>Q – Would the ownership / lease of all the land move to the Trust?</p> <p>Q – What about sustainable development etc.? The land and estate will pass to the Trust. The position will be the same whether we work with PRIMA or not.</p> <p>These sorts of questions would form part of the due diligence process.</p> <p>Governors thanked CB.</p> <p><i>CB and ST left the meeting</i></p>
3	<p>Discussion of Prima Presentation</p> <p>There are two large MAT chains in Bristol, Oasis and the Cabot Learning Federation, as well as other MATs developing in the area, such as Olympus and Excalibur who are both talking to local schools.</p> <p>JBu - Cotham do not have any natural alliances. There is some interest but do not have a queue of primary schools wanting to join us.</p> <p>Cotham has been seen as quite arrogant and inward looking in the city. Colstons Girls Trust now have five primary schools. Cathedral plan to open a secondary school in the North. Redland Green are becoming a MAT – Sarah has worked very hard to develop links across the city and has very strong connections with primary schools in NW24.</p> <p>Need to be realistic about what we offer that is distinct and unique. How have we embodied the Cooperative values in the city? We have not been very outward looking and are not an obvious</p>

preferred partner. JBU believes we need help to do this. It is very difficult to recruit Governors and we will need to recruit trustees.

JB commented on Cotham's strengths. Have very good business management, have an excellent audit record and have a reasonable level of reserves. There are strengths (and weaknesses) in teaching and learning. We do not have the established level of trust with other Headteachers and Governors in the city. Need to think about how we are going to become a MAT.

Vision and values will need to be shared across the schools, whether they are cooperative schools or other models. JBU believes that working with PRIMA would work as we would be key in developing the vision and values.

CB is not going to be the CEO. The idea is that the first CEO comes from Cotham. As the MAT grows, it would be up to the Board of Trustees to appoint the most appropriate person going forward. CB is incredibly well connected, as are the trustees involved with PRIMA. There are people from the University of Bristol, the independent sector, primary schools, developing associate staff and apprenticeships etc.

CB has also set up a free school which is proving to be successful.

The proposal is to agree in principle to work with PRIMA Learning Trust.

Discussion around the financial implications – the benefits are in economies of scale, there is no additional funding.

Discussion around the lack of support network for schools and the advantages of working with other schools in a MAT.

One of the main things that makes a difference in schools is to develop the teachers to do their job.

PRIMA / Best Practice Network have a huge amount of expertise, access to a wide range of training, including accredited and validated training.

Q – What is the link between Best Practice Network and PRIMA? Any school can buy into the Best Practice training. Best Practice Network were the sponsors of the PRIMA MAT. Two of the five initial Members in the structure diagram were from Best Practice Network.

Q – What is PRIMA's growth plan?

It is more about the number of students than the number of schools. There will be one Board of Trustees with schools with Local Governing Bodies. As a MAT grows, there might be an additional Executive Headteacher to assist the CEO to line manage the Headteachers in school.

The Trustees need to have the relevant skill set. It is important to allow other schools the opportunity to nominate trustees.

DY has sent some comments to DB by e-mail. Suggests to agree in principle to work with PRIMA Learning Trust to establish a cooperative trust, given that the new cooperative articles are very close to the standard articles.

Query about how using the cooperative articles would work if we want to allow non cooperative schools to join. DB is not sure how this would work.

Discussion about how the Forum has or has not contributed to the raising of student achievement and whether there are better ways of engaging and embodying the cooperative values. Engagement activities are detailed in the Headteacher's report.

JBU recommends using the standard articles. Can still embrace the cooperative values.

JBU shared the Strategic Priorities, which did not exist before she arrived, and the operational plan. There are some difficult decisions to be made around the budget.

JBU believes this is a gift that we can work with and shape. Believes everything we do should focus on improving student achievement and life chances. There is a group of disenfranchised students and parents in the school and this needs to be addressed.

JBU is passionate about leadership, succession planning and teacher development. Have more in common with schools in East Central and the South than in the North.

	<p>Discussion around the way the Forum is working. Should not drop the work that has been done on the development of the Cooperative Forum.</p> <p>The PRIMA MAT would be open to all different types of schools. We do not have to lose our identity to be part of this but need the standard articles in order to allow different schools to join. We can still be a cooperative academy without the cooperative articles.</p> <p>There are many parents who will not engage with the Forum but are really invested in their children's education.</p> <p>JB proposed to agree in principle to work with PRIMA Learning Trust to establish a MAT. This does not tie us to a particular set of articles.</p> <p>We discussed with the Forum about forming a cooperative MAT. The consultation referred only to a MAT.</p> <p>MS is awaiting clarification about consultation and whether more consultation would be needed.</p> <p>Query about whether there would be a joint partnership with PRIMA or joining an, 'off the peg' MAT.</p> <p>There are advantages to having an outline already in place.</p> <p>This will prompt some of the discussions around what a MAT we were part of / set up would look like.</p> <p>We have to do something. Other schools are moving forward with their plans.</p> <p>It is an exciting opportunity to work to bridge the gaps within the school and in the local community, as well as to build links with the feeder primary schools.</p> <p>Agreed the proposal to work with PRIMA Learning Trust to establish a MAT, unanimously by show of hands.</p>
5	<p>Headteacher's Report</p> <p>The report was circulated prior to the meeting.</p>
6	<p>Committee and other Reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Finance Premises & General Purposes – SF</i> Minutes & recommendations for approval have been circulated. SF talked through the key points. Since the meeting, the Council have approached us about possibly contributing funding for the new classrooms if we can support them in providing more secondary places. Some discussion around the cost of the classrooms and the previous plans for this. There are discussions starting around the use of land and where blocks might be sited. Approved recommendation to use reserve funds for: £160k for an All Weather Pitch £204k for works to windows at Charnwood and works in the Performance Arts block. £500k for the procurement of four new classrooms The 2016-2017 budget has been set using £177k of reserves to balance the budget. The EFA will not see this as a deficit budget. Work is going on to balance future budgets. Approved the budget for 2016-2017 including the use of reserves to set a balanced budget. • <i>Learning & Well-being – CG</i> Minutes have been circulated. • <i>Personnel and Training – DA</i> Minutes have been circulated.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Coop Working Group – DB</i> Minutes have been circulated. • <i>Appointments & Standards - JK</i> Query re safeguarding training for new Governors. Request for Governors to act as mentors for the new Governors.
7	Dates of meetings 2016-2017 - Not discussed
8	Minutes of last meetings – to be agreed by doodle poll.
9	Matters Arising and Action List – circulated prior to the meeting
10	Any Other Business - None

Meeting closed at

Next Meeting –

Signed

Date