

THE BEECHES PRIMARY SCHOOL

MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY

Tuesday 29th November 2016 at 6:15pm

MINUTES

Present: Bill Peasley (Chair), Tim Smith (Headteacher), Adrian Holdstock, Mohammed Jamil, Helen Marsden, Mat Dunstan, Imrana Masters, Sadia Kauser

In Attendance: Helena Renfrew-Knight (DfE) (*for items 1 and 2*), Suzanne Arnold (Clerk)

1 Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed those present. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Charlotte Johnson, Chris Buckler, Emma Chester and Hilary Faulkner.

2 Presentation on Academies

Helena Renfrew-Knight from the DfE was welcomed to the meeting. Helena delivered a presentation entitled "Establishing or Forming a Multi Academy Trust", focusing on "how", "why" and "key considerations".

- It was emphasised that the driver for setting up or joining a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) would be the desire to improve outcomes for children.
- A MAT structure enabled new approaches to organising resources, applying proven best practice procedures across groups of schools, buying in professional development for staff on a MAT basis, employment of specialist staff to work across schools, back office and procurement efficiencies, and improved career opportunities for staff, combined with clearer succession planning.
- The government expectation had previously been for all schools to convert to academy status by 2022. This stipulation had since been removed, but the expectation was still that all schools would become academies in time, and the preferred model was for MATs rather than stand-alone academies.
- Financial pressures could be alleviated by joining a MAT, due to the opportunities for financial efficiencies.
- Examples of staffing models from different MATs were shared. Executive leaders were usually appointed to work across all schools in the MAT, for example in finance, HR, SEND, attendance, and for specialist teaching.
- **Governors asked whether, in the examples given, the outstanding schools which had supported other schools had maintained their outstanding status;** Helena confirmed that this was the case.
- The key factor was emphasised of schools within a MAT sharing the same vision and values and operating as a single team across all schools in the MAT.
- In response to governor questions Helena confirmed that MATs could be made up of both secondary schools and primary schools, or could be single phase. There were advantages to both models.
- A MAT operated as a company and as a charity, with a board of directors who were also charity trustees. The MAT was responsible for the finances and standards in all schools in the MAT. Funding was issued through the Education Funding Agency (EFA), rather than through the local authority, and the MAT was the employer of all staff in the trust.
- The MAT was founded by a small number of members, usually five, whose role was similar to that of shareholders. The members appointed the board directors and also had the power to dismiss directors. Directors needed between them to bring a range of skills, such as finance, HR, estate management, and legal. All director positions were voluntary, except for that of the CEO. Legally, up to a third of the trust board could be employees of the MAT, however, it was preferred by the DfE that the number of employees on the board was kept to a minimum, to enable the board to fully hold the MAT leadership to account.
- Each individual school in the MAT had a local governing body or advisory body. Governors asked what was the role of the local governing body and Helena explained that this was for the trust board

to decide, documenting the requirements through a written scheme of delegation. Governors asked whether the responsibilities varied from trust to trust and Helena confirmed that this was the case, particularly in terms of the level of financial responsibility.

- In setting up a MAT, a group of schools would come together and decide on members, and appoint a CEO. Once a MAT proposal had been put together this would be submitted for approval to the Headteacher Board, and then to the Regional Schools Commissioner. Once the application was approved, the legal work of conversion would take about four to five months to complete.
- The organisation Academy Ambassadors recruited potential candidates for director appointments, and boards could utilise this organisation to help to fill skills gaps on the board.
- It was important to have a single CEO for a MAT; this role was not permitted to rotate.
- The board's role was to set the ethos of the trust, and the accountability routes, and how the MAT would function in terms of organisation and local governance. Governors asked what help was available during this process and were advised that case studies were available, and a guide had been published by Cambridge Education. There was also a good deal of information available online, for example schemes of delegation from other MATs.
- In making a decision to approve a MAT proposal, the Headteacher Board and Regional Schools Commissioner would need to be assured that the proposals were robust and would be effective. Data and the track records of the school's concerned would be scrutinised.
- A school with strong pupil performance data could form a sponsor MAT. A school with weak data would be permitted only to join a trust which had been approved as a sponsor.
- Governors asked whether The Beeches would be required to work with an approved sponsor due to its key stage 2 data in 2016. Helena advised that progress data would be taken into account as well as attainment data, and that all options could therefore be explored.
- Funding was available for all schools which converted, of £25,000. For trusts which were approved as sponsors, a further grant of £45,000 was available to fund school improvement.
- Governors were advised of the process for conversion, from application to the DfE following a governing body resolution to convert. The board of directors and CEO would need to be identified at the application stage. Once the proposals were approved, a staff TUPE consultation process would take place, and land transfers would be negotiated.
- In response to governor questions Helena advised that the CEO was usually a qualified Headteacher, although this was not a stated requirement.
- Governors asked whether MATs could start with a small number of schools and then expand to include other schools and Helena advised that this was often the case.
- Governors asked whether there was evidence that the sponsor model did result in improved outcomes for children, or whether the drivers were more relevant to financial savings. Helena confirmed that the MAT model enabled a focus on specific areas, by specialist staff.
- Examples of governance models were shared, and an example scheme of delegation was displayed.
- Helen emphasised that the CEO was also the trust's accounting officer, supported by a finance director who would provide the necessary financial expertise.
- The key role of the trust board was to oversee the performance of the individual academies, and to track and manage risk across the academies.
- The distinction between consistency and conformity was discussed, it being recognised that consistency in processes and expectations was necessary for all schools in a MAT, but this did not mean that schools sacrificed their own individuality.
- Governors asked whether MATs were inspected by Ofsted as a group and were advised that, currently, each school was inspected separately.

Helena Renfrew-Knight was thanked for her presentation and left the meeting at this point.

3 Declaration of Interest

None declared.

4 Membership of the Governing Body

4.1 Prospective new governors Matt Dunstan and Imrana Masters were welcomed to the governing body and introductions were made.

4.2 Imrana Masters was appointed as a parent governor

- 4.3 Matt Dunstan was appointed as a co-opted governor.
- 4.4 The school had two further vacancies for co-opted governors. The Chair and Headteacher had recently met with a prospective candidate who would be issued with an invitation to the next meeting, with a view to appointment.

Interest had also been expressed by a second candidate and this would be followed up.

Actions:

Clerk to issue invitation to co-opted governor candidate to attend next meeting.

Chair to follow up second possible candidate for co-opted governor vacancy

The vacancies had also been advertised with the School Governors One Stop Shop and at Jack Hunt secondary school.

5 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 14th September 2016 were agreed as an accurate record and were signed as such by the Chair.

6 Matters Arising

6.1 Governor DBS Checks

It was confirmed that Mohammed Jamil and Hilary Faulkner had submitted their DBS certificates to the school, for validation.

6.2 Governor recruitment

It was confirmed that the clerk had forwarded governor recruitment literature to Adrian Holdstock, for advertising governor vacancies in the church community.

6.3 Newsletter

The Chair had drafted a governor article for the school newsletter, and would forward this to the Headteacher.

6.4 School Self Evaluation (SEF) Group

The Chair advised that the SEF Group had met on 30th September to discuss the school's SEF. The SEF would be developed in consultation with the School Improvement Consultant David Turner.

6.5 School Performance Data

The school's inspection dashboard had been circulated to governors.

6.6 Learner Group Analysis

An analysis of pupil performance by learner group had been provided to the Curriculum and Standards Committee.

6.7 IT Project

The Headteacher advised that teething problems with the new IT system were in the process of being resolved. E-mail addresses and logins for governors were being arranged for storage of governor documentation on One Drive. Training on the new system would be arranged for governors.

In response to governor questions the Deputy Headteacher advised that the new IT system incorporated a net protect facility, for monitoring of the system for e-safety; arrangements were being made to provide the Deputy Headteacher with access to this part of the system.

7 Headteacher's Report

7.1 The following documents had been previously circulated.

- Primary strengths and weaknesses
- Pupil Premium report
- Reception baseline report
- Parental Engagement report
- Updated School Development Plan
- Team Leaders' Update

- Inspection Dashboard.

- 7.2 The report on strengths and weaknesses demonstrated that, whilst attainment levels at the school were low, this was due to low starting points, and progress made by children in writing and maths was strong. Progress had not been so strong in reading and this was therefore the key improvement priority going forward.
- 7.3 Data for groups of learners showed that progress in reading had been significantly below the national average for disadvantaged children in the lower attaining group, and for disadvantaged boys in the middle attaining group.
- 7.4 In key stage 1, outcomes for writing had been below the national figure for greater depth, with fewer higher ability writers from EYFS converting this to an assessment of greater depth at the end of key stage 1.
- 7.5 Fewer than 70% of children had achieved the expected standard in phonics in Year 1.
- 7.6 The pupil premium report was presented. In key stage 1 in 2016, the school's pupil premium children had performed better than the school's non-pupil premium children, and has also performed better than national in all subjects. Progress of pupil premium children in key stage 1 was above national.

In key stage 2, the progress of pupil premium children had been significantly above national in writing and maths, but below in reading.

There was therefore no in-school gap between pupil premium and non-pupil premium children at The Beeches although the school's attainment in key stage 2 was below national for all pupils in reading and maths, and in the combined measure.

- 7.7 A baseline report for the Reception cohort had been circulated, based on the CEM scheme. Children had been tested against the scheme, and would be re-tested at the end of the year for an assessment of progress. The Tapestry system had been implemented for the Reception class, providing a way for parents to input into assessment of their children's progress, by updating the system with examples of achievements at home. **Governors asked whether this system would be implemented for other year groups** and were advised that the product was based on the EYFS assessments, and as such was available only to the parents of children in Reception. Further detail would be provided at the meeting of the Curriculum and Standards Committee to take place in January.

Governors were advised that ambitious targets had been set for the Reception cohort for this year.

- 7.8 A report had been submitted of the outcomes of a parental survey undertaken at parents' evening. Adrian Holdstock had attended the evenings as governor representative. **Governors pointed out that a low percentage of the school's Roma parents had attended the parents' evening** and were advised of action the school was taking to address this, included a reading café aimed specifically at Roma families, which had been attended by nine families.
- 7.9 The School Development Plan had been updated in response to discussion at the meeting of the Curriculum and Standards Committee held on 31st October; copies of the updated plans had been RAG rated and had been circulated.

Governors were advised that the objectives for maintaining the number of extra-curricular clubs was RAG rated as red, as take up had reduced following the implementation of charges for these clubs. The school was looking at areas where clubs could be reinstated free of charge, for example the morning cricket club.

- 7.10 Reports on trips and events had been circulated, and were discussed.
- 7.11 The Headteacher was thanked for his report.

8 Committee Reports

8.1 Resources Committee

Chair of the Resources Committee Adrian Holdstock reported from the meeting held on 13th October 2016, the minutes of which had been previously circulated.

- Mohammed Jamil was in the process of clarifying the legal position for land used by the school for the carpark area.
- The committee had approved the pay policy and a draft policy for Critical Incidents was to be submitted to the committee by the Deputy Headteacher.
- The IT project had not been completed within the agreed timeframe. The Headteacher advised that this remained at the project stage as it was not yet fully functional.
- The committee had discussed various premises issues, as reported in the minutes.
- Asbestos removal work was due to take place in February half term.

8.2 Curriculum and Standards Committee

The minutes of the meetings of the Curriculum and Standards Committee held on 28th September and 31st October 2016 had been previously circulated.

It was noted that questions on the School Development Plan had been submitted to leaders ahead of the meeting held on 31st October, and that this had proved a useful strategy as leaders had been able to prepare responses ready for the meeting.

8.3 Headteacher's Performance Management

The Headteacher's performance management review had been carried out by Adrian Holdstock and Charlotte Johnson; salary recommendations had been submitted to the Salary Review Committee.

8.4 Salary Review Committee

The Salary Review Committee had met on 13th October and 31st October to approve salary recommendations.

8.5 Self-Evaluation Working Group

See item 6.4 above.

- 8.6 It was agreed that new governor Matt Dunstan would join the Resources Committee and new governor Imrana Masters would join the Curriculum and Standards Committee.

9 Ratification of Committee Terms of Reference

9.1 Resources Committee

The terms of reference for the Resources Committee had been reviewed by the committee and a recommendation made to increase the threshold for committee approval for non-budgeted decisions to £15,000, with an upper limit for the committee of £25,000.

9.2 Curriculum and Standards Committee

The terms of reference for the Curriculum and Standards Committee had been reviewed by the committee and were approved.

10 Self-Evaluation Form

See item 6.4 above.

11 Marketing the School

The Headteacher reported from a meeting held with the Director of Marketing at Thomas Deacon Academy, where use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter had been emphasised as key marketing tools. As an outcome of this the school was taking steps to develop a Facebook page, which would link with the school website.

12 Safeguarding

The Deputy Headteacher reported safeguarding data, advising that there were currently no children in school who were subject of a Child Protection Plan. Seven children were categorised as children in need, and eight were categorised as "team around the child". The school had initiated two early help assessments so far this term and one child at the school was in care. Three children were working with a play therapist and eighteen children were subject to input by family support workers for issues related to anxiety, social skills and self-esteem. Two referrals had been made to social care and 23 cause for concern reports had been submitted by staff. In response to governor questions the Deputy Headteacher provided examples of the types of incident or situation which may lead to submission of a cause for concern form.

13 School Council

The Deputy Headteacher advised that all classes had held elections for the school council and had elected two councillors per class. The new school council had discussed their position as role models and ways in which they felt that the school could be improved. They hoped to improve behaviour, and to raise money for new equipment. The Council had expressed approval of the new behaviour system. **Governors discussed ways in which home-school partnerships could impact positively on behaviour issues.**

Governors asked whether there were any bullying issues in school and were advised that this was reported to governors termly, however incidents were rare. About six incidents had been recorded in the summer term, the majority of these involving the same child.

Governors asked whether the school council had been involved in the European Local Democracy Week and were advised that the week had been held too early in the academic year, as the school council elections had not yet taken place.

Governors were asked to speak with the Deputy Headteacher if they were able to attend a school council session in an observer capacity, writing up their observations in a governor visit report.

14 Governor Monitoring Visits

Governor visit reports had been circulated for a family café staff training session on 8th November and a Safeguarding visit on 30th September.

15 Governor Development Plan

An outline for the Governor Development Plan for 2016-17 had been previously circulated. Governor links would continue from last year and in addition to this Imrana Masters and Sadia Kauser would link with the Wellbeing strand of the School Development Plan. Sadia would undertake a specific link role for anti-bullying.

16 Governor Training

Matt Dunstan had attended induction training for new governors. Imrana Masters would be attending this training later in the year.

17 Governor Newsletter

See item 6.3 above.

18 Any Other Business

None

19 Date of Next Meeting

Confirmed as Monday 30th January 2017 at 6:15pm

The Chair closed the meeting at 8pm.