

COTHAM SCHOOL

Meeting of the Academy Governing Body

Wednesday 11 February 2015

DRAFT MINUTES OF MEETING

Governors Present: Dora Alderson, CG Jim Bowyer, PG (Chair) David Brockington, PG Ed Carpenter, SG Andrew Ellis, SG Claire Grocott, PG Jeremy Krause, CG Lesley Spring, PG Sujitha Subramanian, PG David Winter, PG David Yorath CG		
In Attendance (non-voting) Christine Ansell, Dep. Head KS3 Svetlana Bajic-Raymond, Dep. Head KS4 Geraldine Hill-Male, Dir. Performing Arts Marian Curran, Dir. Post 16	Apologies Jo Feather CG Sandra Fryer, CG Helen Gordon PG Malcolm Willis, Headteacher Mel Sperring, Business Manager Absent: Caroline Francis, SG	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	Welcome, Apologies for Absence, declarations of interest and notification of AOB Apologies accepted. AOB – Supply Teachers – DW
3	Admissions CA talked through the paper that was discussed at LWB. A number of local schools are changing their policies The earliest we could change our admissions policy now is September 2017, with consultation to start around 1 November this year. Where local schools have their own primary schools, it is likely that those children will have priority to admission to the secondary school, places are being allocated to specialisms. Every school (including a number that are not in the paper) that has made a change has included priority for children of staff. September admissions is a huge job and the LA do this very well. We need to consider managing our own in-year admissions as there we are not able to exercise any control over the students who are arriving in-year – we cannot ask for background or ask for negotiated transfer. There was a query & discussion about the legality of schools choosing who they allow in and who polices the banding.

	<p>This was discussed at a meeting of LA Governors in Academies. The response was that there will be an issue around numbers.</p> <p>We have previously said we would consult the Forum on the admissions policy.</p> <p>There is no suggestion we do anything illegal or unethical around admissions.</p> <p>The paper included information about the numbers of staff children involved.</p> <p>The Fair Access Panel protocols are generally well followed. This is separate to Fair Access – the rules are that a space should be offered to a child if there is one available, without being allowed to request any information about the student. This makes it quite difficult to do transition planning and put appropriate support in place. Schools have been working on negotiated transfers between themselves.</p> <p>JK is happy to report back from this meeting to raise the issue about transfers at meetings of LA Governors. There was further discussion around this. The Fair Access Panel are working to challenge issues where they can.</p> <p>Need to focus on whether we are going to make changes to the policy and what changes to make.</p> <p>The Forum have requested that Governors consider giving priority to children of staff members.</p> <p>Qu - If we do make this change, can we still use Bristol City Council for September admissions? Yes we can.</p> <p>Staff parents are asking for a guaranteed place for their children. Only 50% of admissions come from our area of priority and we are going out quite a long way to fill the 216 places.</p> <p>The issue of applications for admissions is quite broad. We may want to consider having agreements and other types of relationships with other schools and this should be factored in.</p> <p>Although there will be more students overall in Bristol, the pool of students available to Cotham will be different as children in primaries attached to secondaries are no longer coming to Cotham. The demographic of the school could change quite dramatically.</p> <p>Considering admissions from staff children would be a small change compared to overall admissions. The Forum have asked that this be done.</p> <p>Need to be clear about the length of service required for staff children to be given priority.</p> <p>There is time to put together some proposals on exactly what we would propose</p> <p>JB proposed to put together a working party to work on this – JK, DA, DB, CG, DY - Agreed</p>
2	<p>Future Post-16 Provision in Bristol</p> <p>MC gave a brief background and talked through some of the key points.</p> <p>Noted students must stay in education or training until the age of 18. This does not necessarily mean post-16 education.</p> <p>The map gives current provision and future provision that will be coming into Bristol. The question is whether this is the right provision for students in Bristol.</p> <p>The trend locally matches the national trend.</p> <p>Looked at vocational provision in North Bristol. Although vocational provision is growing, the distribution is uneven. The only vocational provision at level 3 was what we offer as a centre. The other provision is in colleges.</p> <p>In the south of Bristol, the vocational offer is very popular.</p> <p>If we look at capacity and at trends over time, what is the quality of provision at that centre – what is the diet students can have?</p> <p>Level 3 outcomes by entry vary across the city. Raises questions around what students study and where they might go if they leave Post-16 provision.</p> <p>There is a question about the diet available to students and whether they are simply choosing from what is available, rather than the best route for them.</p>

Qu – what will we need to think about in terms of Cotham’s future Post-16 provision and how we collaborate with other schools?

If there is too much competition, there may be courses that are not full.

Page 8 & 9 of hand out gives a rough overview of what is available at small sixth forms.

There is not enough provision of level 2 in the city, but this will mean 3 years in sixth form which has its own issues.

There are issues where students are leaving and not re-entering and the question is whether they were on the right courses.

Many students in Bristol are choosing very academic pathways.

Qu – are students being pushed into academic pathways? It is a mixture – if students want to stay in a school with a small sixth form, academic courses may be all that they can offer.

Looked at the story of students in Bristol – many left level 2 courses and re-started another level 2 course in a college, therefore making little progress

Cotham offer science, IT, Business and Health & Social Care vocational pathways.

Qu – is the demand for those courses higher than for academic in North Bristol? Not necessarily as many do a combination of vocational and academic.

When we move to linear qualifications, those who leave after one year will leave with nothing.

Qu – is the suggestion that we need to increase the size of Post-16 provision, to deliver better quality and more level 2 & 3 vocational courses? Always need to review curriculum and capacity across the two centres.

Numbers are growing in the North Bristol centre.

Students will choose institutions that give good outcomes. We have a responsibility to improve the outcomes for our own centre and for other providers too.

Qu – should the Governing Body be looking to expand provision? Possibly

Qu – are students coming in being put onto inappropriate courses? No, a great deal of time is spent advising students

Is still drop-out. Some students are not ready due to circumstances in their life, and some because they find something else they would rather do. Our students do not generally become ‘not in employment, education or training’ (NEET).

Should also consider more level 2 provision. Need to know where those students are going to go after this to continue making progress.

There is no further money available and any changes need to be financially viable.

There are two ways of looking at this – we could work with other providers to improve their outcomes and grow their sixth form provision so that students can stay there, rather than simply expanding our own provision.

This will need better connectivity between us and other providers to happen. There are some links in the city already.

This is something that needs to be looked at in the next year, along with Redland Green.

Could be creating innovative programs to give more choice, rather than confining it to academic vs vocational. Students must always be making progress.

Qu – how can Governors support this? Will come back to this.

Bristol as a whole has a problem with retention compared to the national picture.

There were students who did not get 5 A* to C who stay on. Some of those become NEET, others wait until September and start a level 2 course rather than a level 3. Different providers are putting students on different courses.

Will need to have a further meeting with Redland to discuss this.

	<p>Qu – what is meant by working with other providers and supporting them? It can work in different ways – with students moving between centres and bringing in people to deliver courses.</p> <p>In small sixth forms, teachers are not always specialists in the subject area (e.g. a class of four for sociology)</p> <p>Qu – why is it that smaller providers are maintaining small sixth forms? There is an attraction for 11-18 schools. As long as they can offer some provision, they can support those students not ready for college. This may have a knock-on effect on students elsewhere in the school in terms of funding.</p> <p>Discussion around the viability and performance of sixth forms, recruitment and funding.</p> <p>There is a desire to establish what provision there is and for schools to work together.</p>
4	<p>Forum Update</p> <p>GHM talked through the paper that was tabled at the meeting.</p> <p>School Counsellor proposal – needs to go to SLT, then to the Personnel and Training Committee and the Finance & General Purposes Committee.</p> <p>Requested that Governors attend the Forum meetings. There is a sheet with the dates of meetings to be circulated for people to sign up.</p> <p>Qu – what is Future First? An organisation set up to try and create an alumni system in the state sector.</p> <p>Qu – what is CPAN? Cotham Performing Arts Network.</p> <p>Up to date information is available on the website.</p> <p>Qu – where are we with developing the House system? Students visited another school with a very good house system. Caroline Francis has just put an achievement plan in place using the vertical grouping in the house system. GHM is working with a group to put some things in place in September. The kids are really keen on this.</p> <p>Annual plan – LS to pull this together</p> <p>Jo Butler is organising days when she can come and visit. She will focus on meeting Malcolm and getting to know the school first and then move on to Governing Body and</p>
5	<p>Pay Policy</p> <p>This was circulated in advance and has been discussed in all the committees.</p> <p>DA proposed that the policy is adopted - seconded by JK</p>
6	<p>Headteacher Report</p> <p>As MW is not present, JB asked that questions be e-mailed to MW.</p> <p>Comment that the visit from the Green Party leader might become a photo opportunity for the Green Party and this should be avoided.</p>
7	<p>Committee and other Reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Learning & Well-being – CG</i> Minutes have been circulated. CG summarised the discussions. CG thanked SLT for the work involved in recent Governor visits. • <i>Personnel and Training – DA</i> Minutes have been circulated. DA summarised the discussions. Emphasised discussion around Governors' Away Day on 14th March. <p>Qu – on new approach to teacher training (School Direct) - will we sever links with University? No, we want to have as broad an approach as possible. There was still concern that taking on this new approach could water down the currently strong relationship with the University and possibly lead to that scheme petering out. School Direct still has one day a week of university attendance.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>FP&GP – SF</i> Minutes have been circulated. Minutes from 2 Feb have not yet been circulated – LS to circulate these when they are agreed. DY summarised the discussions • <i>Audit Committee – DW</i> This committee has not met since the last meeting. Internal Audit will now be provided by Bristol City Council. The committee does not currently have enough members. Chairs and members of FPGP and Appointments and Standards. There is a parent election happening and there are two Community Governor vacancies. People will need to be members of the Community Constituency to become Community Governors. DW will meet with MS on Friday. Suggestion to look for a qualified person to join the Audit Committee. This could be a professional appointment. DY to look for someone to appoint to the Audit Committee. • <i>Appointments & Standards</i> Have not met, due to meet Tues 3rd March.
8	<p>Minutes of last meetings</p> <p>14 July 2014 – there was a typo on a date, otherwise agreed as correct. 22 October 2014 – Agreed as correct. 5 December 2014 – Date was incorrect – now corrected – agreed as correct. 10 December 2014 - Date was incorrect – now corrected – agreed as correct.</p>
9	<p>Matters Arising and Action List</p> <p>Learning walks – CG and DA found these very useful. Thanked the staff who facilitated these.</p>
10	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p><i>Building of new classrooms.</i></p> <p>A paper was circulated prior to the meeting. Planning permission has been given. Request is that FGB agree to fund the building in full from reserves if the funding bid is unsuccessful. There is little choice about building the classrooms as the school cannot operate for more than a few weeks without them. Could argue that the reserves are too high and money should have been spent previously. Qu – are we absolutely certain that we need this? As part of the bid there was another independent review of the space in the school that concluded the new space is needed. If we commit the full amount to the building, then there will not be enough to fund the five year plan for ICT strategic investment. There is a need to start developing a strategy to replenish reserves for future projects. Qu – has Jo Butler been informed of this decision? We don't know – she should be kept informed. At some point there will be some tough decisions to be taken. This has been discussed in FPGP and the next meeting will be devoted to discussing the budget. This meeting will have the mid-year forecast Qu - Is it urgent that this decision is made tonight? Yes, if we instruct the contractors now, we should have the classrooms in place before the beginning of September JK proposed accepting the proposal. Agreed by show of hands (unanimous)</p>

<p>There is the possibility of using other sources of funding. Governors are also asked to note that any shortfall on the estimated cost would have to be covered from reserves. There would have to be a formal decision to fund the shortfall. The recommendation needs to be amended to be clear that further funding from reserves would be subject to further approval.</p> <p>Supply Teachers – DW Supply teachers are used quite a lot and are not popular with students. Feels we should be informed about how much the school uses supply teachers and how the spend is broken down. Two aspects to track – the number of days in each subject and the number of people that are being covered. To pick up at the next Learning & Wellbeing</p> <p>Feedback from LA Governors briefing – JK Believes communication should be as open as possible. Issue came up around safeguarding. Looked after children are the most vulnerable and we need to be able to say we are responding and are aware of the issues. Also radicalisation we should be engaging fully in the issue with other schools. What would Governors like JK to raise as an LA representative? Please e-mail Jeremy Comment that this is a more systematic channel of communication with the Local Authority.</p> <p>DB - Will circulate details of an event that Governors might be interested in</p>

Meeting closed at 21:21
Next Meeting - 25 March 2015

Signed

Date