

Please forward any matters relating to the Minutes below to: **THE CLERK TO THE GOVERNORS - ELIZABETH JAHN**

FULL GOVERNING BODY MEETING – TERM 3 **Held at the school on Tuesday 2 February 2016 at 3.00pm**

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Lawayne Jefferson (Chair)	Barry Trahar
Tim Whitaker (Vice Chair)	Fiona Hallsworth
Sarah Baker (Headteacher)	Kate Teal
Naresh Rao	Rod Symmons
Catherine Hallam	Nicholas Lind (Deputy Headteacher)
Rita Deegan	Liz Hankinson (PA to Headteacher)
Hilary Jeffkins	Elizabeth Jahn (Clerk)
Darren McKimm	

The meeting was noted to be quorate

ITEM	MINUTE	ACTION
1.	Welcome & Apologies for Absence	
	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from Marian Curran, Louise Blundell, Rachel Richardson, Andrew Scoble, Ciara Campfield, Marilyn Barnard, Sarah Everett-Cox and Fiona Elder. Ciara Campfield attended the meeting through a telephone call.	
2.	Attendance & Business/Pecuniary Interest Register	
	Governors were reminded of their responsibility to declare interests. [Rod Symmons entered the meeting.]	
3.	Strategic Development	
3.1	Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) Formation Pros & Cons The Headteacher explained that when originally set up, the school could either have been a standalone Academy or a multi-Academy Trust (MAT). The Governing Body decided to be a standalone Academy but this was no longer seen as desirable by the government and funding was also decreasing. Currently, the school had a Headteacher and a Strategic Leadership Team (SLT); most schools now had four or five Trustees and a Governing Body. The new thinking was to have a small group of Trustees who set direction and had education and professional experience to lead the strategic vision and ensure financial probity and compliance. The government now wanted schools to be run by education practitioners in MATs and sponsored by successful schools. Recently the Local Authority (LA) sent out a statement inviting schools to make an expression of interest to open a new east central secondary school with a deadline of the 29 January 2016. The Governing Body submitted an expression of interest and had been selected to make a presentation to a panel on Friday 5 February 2016; the Headteacher provided an overview of the process. Governors discussed the different governance models and agreed that the Governing Body needed to look at other schools and see what was best for Redland Green School students. Governors agreed that the advantages of becoming a MAT included extending leadership and professional development opportunities; being part of a larger community to develop good practice; being able to weather recruitment problems more easily with greater staffing flexibility; and not having the full costs of recruitment as often leaders were promoted from within the group. The latter also supported the school being able to offer better incentives and career progression.	

Approval (Initials)



3.2 Governor Roles in MATs

[Hilary Jeffkins entered the meeting.]

Governors discussed the role of an Executive Headteacher and accountability for each of the schools; it was recognised that the Head of each school would hold accountability for their individual school; the Executive Headteacher would be accountable for all of the schools and the Governing Body and ultimately the Trustees would be accountable to the Department for Education (DfE). Governors noted that this was similar to the current accountability structure of the North Bristol Post 16 Centre.

Governors asked whether the decision regarding which schools Redland Green School would like to work with would need to be agreed prior to consultation, or was this something that would be considered after consultation; the Headteacher advised that the Governing Body might consider which type of school they would like to work with and identify this within the consultation documents, however, it was not usual for the documents to include reference to specific schools.

Governors asked if the SLT had identified any particular schools that they would like to work with; the Headteacher advised that this had been discussed but no particular schools had been identified as all options would need to be considered. Governors agreed that they would prefer not to join an existing MAT. Governors asked how far afield would schools be considered to join the MAT; the Headteacher advised that South Gloucestershire was probably the furthest afield.

[Catherine Hallam entered the meeting.]

Governors asked if forming a MAT would be a consideration should the east central Free School bid not arise; the Headteacher confirmed that, taking into account the current political landscape and the view of the government that Academies should not be standalone, converting to a MAT would have been considered regardless of the Free School bid.

Governors agreed that MATs themselves did not bring about improvement in education, however, strong leadership and management within those MATs did support improvement.

Governors recognised that due to the Governing Body's involvement in setting up Redland Green School, there was experience and expertise available to support moving to a MAT and taking over responsibility for the east central Free School. Governors also recognised that it would mean additional work for the Governing Body, but it was also felt that there was capacity within the Governing Body to support this work, particularly as other support would be available.

Governors asked if the school's curriculum would benefit from becoming a MAT and taking over responsibility for the Free School; the Headteacher confirmed that a MAT was likely to broaden the curriculum options including vocational and work experience opportunities, which were currently not available through Redland Green School. Governors asked how much access Redland Green School students would have given the distance between the two schools; the Headteacher advised that it would probably be through one-day sessions etc that were not affordable for one school but through economies of scale, it would be possible to hold the events for both schools.

Governors also asked how taking on the Free School would impact on the North Bristol Post 16 Centre as well as Cotham School's decision to become a MAT; the Headteacher advised that she had been informed that Cotham School's conversion to a MAT would not impact on the Centre and it was expected that the soft federation between the two schools would continue. The Headteacher advised that the Free School's Post 16 provision was likely to be different from the North Bristol Post 16 Centre's provision and therefore, this would increase the post 16 opportunities for Redland Green School students.

Governors asked if there was a 'plan B' should the bid be unsuccessful; the Headteacher advised that the outcome of the bid would be known by next Term, if the school was unsuccessful the decision to become a MAT could still be made and the Governing Body would then need to consider options regarding which schools it would like to join with.

Governors recognised that the SLT were supportive of both converting to a MAT and of taking on responsibility for the Free School, but asked how much was due to the ambitions of the SLT and the desire to have this on their CV, and how much because of a genuine interest in supporting improving education within Bristol; the Headteacher advised that staff were very ambitious and former members of the SLT had progressed to significant roles at other schools, which suggested the high reputation and quality of staff that Redland Green secured, however, the SLT was also passionate about improving education for young people beyond their own role.

Governors also asked whether there was a risk that the Free School's students' outcomes could negatively impact on the outstanding outcomes of Redland Green School; the Headteacher advised that this was a risk but no greater than the risks that could come about anyway in education.

	<p>Governors discussed the role of a local Governing Bodies and agreed that there would be some work needed around the governance arrangements, particularly for existing Governors to understand their role within any new arrangements.</p> <p>Governors asked if the SLT was clear about the different challenges that a school in another part of Bristol could face; the Headteacher confirmed that they were and it was recognised that additional strategies/staff requirements might be needed to support the school eg around behaviour management, diversity etc.</p>	
3.3	<p>Questions Receive Ahead of Meeting</p> <p>Governors noted the following questions that had been received prior to the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the implications for the school leadership and Chair of Governors? • What was the impact of the Headteacher's time away from the school preparing the bid etc and what will be in place to address this without impacting on school? • What was the impact on the Governing Body? • What does it mean for staff? • Do we have the resources (time, skill, finances) to prepare for this if selected? • Would the new school impact on Redland Green School's area of first priority for admissions? • Would the short timeframe to set-up the school pose undue challenge for the school? (My thoughts here are is this for RGS or the Exec of the new school?) • Why was it not present to the Governing Body sooner? • Could the school just become a MAT and not take on a school but instead wait to see what happens/what the lie of the land in the future will be re MATs? • Why could we not just continue as we are as in the NW24 partnership? • Could we not become a MAT with Cotham School who we were already working with? • How would MAT status affect our relationship with Claremont School and our partner schools? • Why did we need to rush to do this now? • How do the SLT feel about it? • Do we have the resources within the Governing Body to ensure due diligence within the timescales imposed by the process? • What impact would becoming a sponsor have on a) the financial stability and b) the ethos of Redland Green School? • What do we wish to achieve by becoming a MAT? • What would be the benefits for the pupils at Redland Green School? • What were the specific, formal requirements for consultation if we wanted to become a MAT and go ahead with sponsoring the new school? • As an RGS parent, why should I support this move? • What were the potential downsides for RGS pupils, and how would the school mitigate these? <p>Governors noted that these questions had been covered during the earlier discussions.</p>	
4.	Questions & Open Discussion <i>[taken out of order]</i>	
4.1	<p>Take Questions From the Floor & Facilitate Discussion on MAT Leadership for Redland Green School</p> <p>Governors asked themselves if they felt that they understood the information that had been provided and was available through other sources to make an informed decision regarding converting to a MAT and agreed that they did.</p> <p>Governors considered and agreed to apply for conversion to become a MAT subject to stakeholder consultation; there was one abstention.</p> <p>[Nicholas Lind left the meeting.]</p>	
3.	Strategic Development	
3.4	<p>Expression of Interest (EOI)</p> <p>Governors considered and agreed to proceed with the east central Free School bid.</p>	

4.	Questions & Open Discussion	
4.2	Take Questions From the Floor & Facilitate Discussion on MAT Leadership for Redland Green School There was nothing further to note at this time.	
4.3	Next Steps Governors noted that following the presentation in support of the EOI, the successful school would need to formally submit the bid to be considered by the DfE. Governors asked whether external support would be sought to support writing the bid; the Headteacher confirmed that external support was available and would be sought as it was important that expertise was utilised to ensure that the best possible bid was submitted. Governors asked if the school was disadvantaged compared to competing schools that were experienced in preparing bids; the Headteacher suggested that this might be the case, but the external support would 'level the playing field'.	
5.	AOB	
	There was no other business to consider.	
6.	Date & Time of Next FGBM	
	Tuesday 22 March 2016, 6.15-8.15pm	

Minutes agreed by the Governing Body and signed by the Chair of Governors:

SIGNED: **DATE:** 22 March 2016