

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 24 January 2012 at 7.00pm

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Annemieke Waite (Chair)	Ian Champion-Smith
Darren McKimm (Vice Chair)	Judy Patterson
Sarah Baker (Headteacher)	Lawayne Jefferson
Tim Trout	Anthony Ward
Bharti Joshi	Penny Mooney (Associate Member)
Dave Jackson	Kim Garland (Associate Member)
Alison Cossons	Rupert Maule (Associate Member)
Claire Pick	Kate Rick (SSIO)
Sylvia Townsend	Marian Curran (Attendee)
John Waldron	Elizabeth Jahn (Clerk)
Emma Waldon	

The meeting was noted to be quorate

ITEM	MINUTE	ACTION
1	<p>Welcome & Apologies for Absence</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from Barry Trahar, Astrid Kopmels, Rod Symmons and Steph Ball. Anthony Ward apologised he would be late.</p>	
2	<p>Attendance & Business/Pecuniary Interest Register</p> <p>Governors were reminded of their responsibility to declare interests; the Register was circulated and duly signed.</p>	
3	<p>Academy Working Group Update & Recommendation</p> <p>The Working Group's Report and supporting documents had previously been distributed; Governors thanked the group for their hard work and for the comprehensive report that was presented in a very clear way. Darren McKimm advised that there are three stages to Academy conversion and it was important to note that the school is only at Stage 1: register an interest on the Department for Education (DfE) website. The second stage would be to apply to convert and the third stage would be the signing of the Funding Agreement. Up to the third stage, any decisions or actions taken could be reversed. There is an expectation on schools that they will consult with stakeholders but there is no set point at which this should happen; the group recommended that, should the decision to taken to register an interest, the consultation should begin immediately and prior to the Governing Body's decision at the second stage. Governors agreed that it was important to consult before making an application to convert.</p> <p>Governors asked if a change in government/Secretary of State would impact on the school should it become an Academy; the Working Group acknowledged that any change in government could impact and that there are a certain amount of unknowns and uncertainties; it is difficult to take a long-term view of the situation regardless of whether the school is an Academy or maintained school. The Working Group's recommendation was that a decision needs to be made on what is known now and any possible changes that may arise during the consultation period up to the point of signing the Funding Agreement.</p> <p>Governors discussed the freedom of Academies not to follow the National Curriculum (NC); the Headteacher advised that most schools believe that the NC meets most students' needs and so Academies are likely to follow the NC. The current NC meets the needs of most of the school's students.</p>	

Approval (Initials)

Governors asked who the school would be accountable to if they are not accountable to the Local Authority (LA); the Working Group advised that schools will be accountable directly to the DfE and will also be accountable for outcomes within the Ofsted framework. The Secondary School Improvement Officer (SSIO) advised that Academies and schools must deliver a broad and balanced curriculum under the framework and that the view of the government is that education should be handed back to the professionals and that whether a school or an Academy, the professionals should know what is best for their students.

Governors noted that there is a risk of a significant deficit next year although funding beyond 3 years is unknown. There would be a substantial net benefit to funding next year if the school converted but it is expected that this is not sustainable at this level so Governors cannot rely on future funding. The current advice is that Academies should not fund long-term things eg employing an extra teacher. In theory, conversion will provide compensation to maintain the status quo for as long as possible; if the school does not convert it will be forced to take appropriate measures to reduce the projected deficit.

Governors asked whether the Working Group recommended the sponsored Academy model; Darren McKimm advised that the sponsored Academy model is not a model the Working Group is recommending at this stage; it was noted that the model does not bring financial sponsorship. It may be considered in more detail at the second stage of the process. The school is already able to share partnership arrangements with other schools/organisations through informal/formal collaboration.

Governors asked if the school will need to identify a failing school to work with; the Headteacher advised that the school would have to identify a school but it does not have to be failing. The school already works with lots of other schools, primaries and secondaries etc and is part of the North Bristol Partnership.

Governors discussed whether there would be additional workload following the conversion process; the Headteacher advised that it will probably generate more work for the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT), and for the Finance, HR Team etc; the school should receive £25k funding to support the conversion from the DfE which would enable the school to bring in outside support which is preferable so the conversion does not detract from existing roles. As a new, large school there is already a lot of finance, HR, admin support so the school is not in the same situation as a small primary school.

Governance was discussed; a more detailed discussion will take place at the next meeting.

Governors asked who would take on the LA's accountability; the Working Group advised that the school would instruct external experts to support them, which could possibly still be the LA. The school has already identified the LA for SEN support. The LA still retains responsibility for placing students with Statements and children in care, so nothing will change in that regard.

[Anthony Ward entered the meeting.]

Governors discussed the impact on staff including TUPE implications. The Director of Finance & Administration advised that the Academy will have the right to restructure and change employees' terms, however this is no different to the rights that the school and LA current have eg through the management of change process. It may be necessary for the Academy to implement the management of change process but this will not be because of conversion, it will most likely be due to the deficit that the school is facing.

The unions will be consulted during the next stage. It was noted that as more schools are converting, there appears to be less concern raised by staff as more information is available compared to the early stages of Academy conversions. Governors agreed that staff are the school's most important asset so the process needs to be completely transparent so that staff are not demoralised. Essentially the spirit of the terms and conditions currently in place will be adhered to.

Governors asked what the impact would be on excluded children. The Headteacher briefly outlined the current process schools undertake to prevent a student's exclusion which demonstrated the commitment of partnership working that is already in place and which will continue whether the school is an Academy or not.

The school's Admissions Policy could stay the same or could change; this would be a Governing Body decision, however the Headteacher advised that the school would want to stay with LA admissions initially; in-year admissions will revert back to all schools/Academies from next year regardless.

	<p>Governors asked how the SLT felt about becoming an Academy; the Headteacher advised that the best way forward in light of the current climate is to register an interest, though there are caveats which could change at any time. However, it was noted that it is a Governing Body decision.</p> <p>Governors noted that Academies do not have to include the word Academy in their name.</p> <p>After a lengthy discussion, Governors agreed to register an interest in converting to an Academy (one abstention was noted). The Working Group were again thanked for enabling the Governing Body to have due diligence with the clear report provided. The Working Group will draft the communication to staff and parents/carers informing them of the Governing Body's decision and will also prepare the consultation documents. The SSIO requested that the school informs Nick Batchelar and Annie Hudson, CYPS, of the Governing Body's decision.</p>	
4	<p>AOB</p> <p>There was no other business to consider.</p>	
5	<p>Date & Time of Next Full Governing Body Meeting</p> <p>Tuesday 7 February 2012 at 7.00pm</p>	

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

SIGNED: **DATE:** 7 February 2012