

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

### **FULL GOVERNING BODY MEETING – TERM 4** **Held at the school on Tuesday 19 March 2013 at 6.30pm**

#### **MINUTES**

**PRESENT:**

Annemieke Waite (Chair)	Lawayne Jefferson
John Waldron (Vice Chair)	Karen Thompson
Sarah Baker (Headteacher)	Judy Patterson
Darren McKimm	Anthony Ward
Barry Trahar	Rachel Richardson
Rita Deegan	Rupert Maule (Attendee)
Lauren Metcalf	Louise Blundell (Attendee)
Claire Wilkins	Elizabeth Jahn (Clerk)

*The meeting was noted to be quorate*

ITEM	MINUTE	ACTION
1	<p><b>Welcome, Apologies for Absence</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly new Governors. Apologies were received and accepted from Claire Pick, Claire Wilkins, Robin Welham, Marian Curran and Sylvia Townsend.</p>	
2	<p><b>'How to be an Outstanding Governing Body'</b></p> <p>John Waldron fed back from his recent attendance at the Association of Bristol Governors (ABG) meeting and provided extracts from the PowerPoint presentation from Annie Hudson, CYPS Director, and Professor Chris James, University of Bath. The key points from Professor James were that a great Governing Body has a high profile; reports to its stakeholders; is ready for Ofsted; asks challenging questions; recruits actively; has an excellent Clerk; and takes training seriously. A great Governing Body also works as a team; has the right capabilities; fully understands student attainment and the finances; has a full grasp of school self-evaluation and the School Development Plan; and has an excellent Chair who has a productive relationship with the Headteacher.</p> <p>Governors asked whether, as an Academy, there should be greater freedom from ideology, ie the Governing Body is still following the same ideology, so when the Local Authority (LA) states what makes a great Governing Body, should Governors challenge that ideology. John Waldron pointed out that the presentation is not specifically what the LA states as outstanding governance; Professor James has researched governance significantly and the list presented is what he and other experts have identified as good governance, including Ofsted and the National Governors Association (NGA).</p> <p>The Chair acknowledged that there are lots of different views and as such, it is not appropriate to only undertake training from the LA; therefore, the Governing Body has subscribed to the NGA which is the overarching organisation for governance in this country. Governors will be able to access guidance that is not available without subscription; Governors will also receive a regular magazine and will be able to attend NGA conferences and training courses.</p> <p>The Chair advised that the Governing Body has also subscribed to Ten Governor which is a very useful website. If the information is not available on the site, Governors are able to ask questions and Ten Governor will provide an answer including, where there is ambiguity, a direct response from the Department for Education (DfE).</p> <p>The Governing Body has also subscribed to ELC Gel which is a website specifically for school governance. As a result of these subscriptions, Governors will be able to participate in a range of training and networking opportunities which will broaden the knowledge and understanding of the Governing Body. Once the subscriptions are finalised, Governors will be provided with the details of how to access the relevant websites.</p>	EJ

Approval (Initials) .....

**3 Routine Governing Body Business Including:**

- **Attendance & Business/Pecuniary Interest Register**

Governors were reminded of their responsibility to declare interests; the Register was circulated and duly signed.

- **Approval of Committee Membership & Appointment of Link/Named Governors**

One Governor stated that collective responsibility was a form of censorship and he did not wish to subscribe to it. The Chair outlined the core principles of a functioning and effective Governing Body, ie working as a team, confidentiality, and also collective responsibility. Governors need to agree to not publically criticise the school, staff and Governors if they disagree with any decision taken and not to publically embarrass the Governing Body. The principles of the Governors' Code of Practice Policy were written by the NGA and Governors need to be able to express their views freely within meetings, but once a decision is made by the majority of Governors present, Governors must abide by that decision and take collective responsibility for it otherwise Governors will feel unable to express their views freely if they fear their comments/views will be shared beyond Governing Body meetings in a negative way.

One Governor challenged the Trust Members' right to draw up the draft Committee structure and whether the Trust Members were acting as 'super-Governors' with a higher authority than other Governors. The Chair responded that as Chair, one of the responsibilities is to ensure the effectiveness of the Governing Body. If Ofsted were to visit, it is very likely that they will ask to speak to the Chair about how the Governing Body works including whether there is mutual trust and effective team working which is in the best interests of the school and its stakeholders.

The Chair also advised that the draft structure had been reviewed by the Trust following the Governing Body skills audit. The findings of that audit identified where Governors' skills could be used to the best effect. Individual Governors had then been asked to confirm if they would be happy with their allotted Committee membership and Link Governor areas; all had agreed. The draft structure had then been reviewed by the Finance, Leadership & Management Committee who recommended that it be submitted to the full Governing Body (FGB) for approval; however, the FGB could reject the draft or amend it if that was felt appropriate.

Governors asked how else could the draft be drawn up unless an unnecessary amount of time was allocated to it at the meeting which is not best use of Governors' time. It was agreed that Governors need somewhere to start and the draft provided that. Governors also noted that this is common practice at other Governing Bodies, ie the Chair looks at the requirements of the Committees, then at the skills of the Governors, and brings a proposal to the Governing Body where Governors will bring the greatest contribution.

One Governor asked if the Trust expected Governors to undertake roles and responsibilities training before being able to sit on a Committee; the Chair responded that generally no, however, where there is a fundamental difference in the views expressed by a Governor to what is identified above as being the core principles of good governance ie around collective responsibility and confidentiality, then the Chair is responsible for ensuring the effectiveness and functioning of the Governing Body Committees. If Governors have expressed concern and a reluctance to be on a Committee with a particular Governor due to those concerns, then the Chair has a responsibility to try to identify and bring about a resolution. In this case, training to ensure the Governor understands the principles of collective responsibility and confidentiality and can agree to subscribe to them was felt appropriate. The Governor concerned stated that the Trust members had refused to discuss this when requested; the Chair refuted this allegation and stated that a meeting was offered with the Trust Members and refused.

Governors noted that Committee meetings are usually during the evening but there may be some occasions where meetings may take place during the school day; there will also be events that Governors are invited to participate in that can only take place during the school day eg interviews. However, it was recognised that fortunately, the Governing Body has a wide-range of availability within its Governing Body and whilst some Governors may not be able to attend day-time meetings/ events due to work, there are also lots of activities that take place during the evening where their attendance would be warmly welcomed.

Governors considered and agreed to approve the proposed Committee membership including the suggested Chairs of Committees; Barry Trahar as Chair of the Staff Development Committee and Lawayne Jefferson as Chair of the Personal Development Committee (Rod Symmons had already been elected Chair of the Teaching & Learning Committee). The Chair of the Audit Committee will be determined at the first meeting of the Committee. The future of the North Bristol Post 16 Committee has still to be determined; the Chair will be considered at the next meeting of the Committee.

[A short recess was called.]

- **Feedback from Charter Working Group**

Feedback from the Working Group's meeting with CfBT had been included in the Finance, Leadership & Management Committee Minutes; Governors noted the contents and also that John Waldron has since contacted CfBT to ensure that they are clear regarding the expectations of the brief. CfBT has advised that Katia Major is now available and will be able to project manage the scope of work outlined by the Working Group.

The consultation will take place with stakeholders and the first draft will be brought back to Governors in Term 6. The scope of work also includes looking at different models of governance, eg the co-operative model. Governors asked if Minutes are available from the meeting; Lawayne Jefferson stated that there were not however, although the outline and framework of the charter is not yet ready for distribution, it will be brought back to Governors as soon as it is available. Governors also asked if there will be only the one consultation with parents/carers that recently took place; Lawayne Jefferson confirmed that there will be several opportunities for consultation. Once the school has identified key dates for the consultation meetings these will be published including on the website.

- **Approval of the Appointment of External Auditors**

Jon Rawlings, Link Governor for Finance, had been involved in the selection process; a summary report had previously been distributed. Jon explained that he has experience as an external auditor. Jon further explained that there were 3 key priorities for the appointment: how the auditors would deal with the statutory process; how they would provide support to the Director of Finance & Administration; and how they are striving to follow best practice in the sector. One company was rejected due to a lack of experience within Bristol (they had only provided support to one Academy in Bristol); the firm had also only been in place for 12 months and did not have local experience and therefore, there was concern of how they will be able to share best practice etc. Another company was rejected because they were lacking in experience in the sector (they only work for 5 Academies in the local area).

The proposed auditors were therefore Bishop Fleming who were able to demonstrate significant experience and are considered market leaders providing a service to 90 Academies last year and 130 this year. They were able to explain how they would guide the Director through the process including identifying links with local Academies to share experience and best practice. The additional first year support fee may be reduced next year when the Director has experience of the process.

Governors considered and agreed the recommendation to appoint Bishop Fleming as the school's external auditors subject to satisfactory references being received.

- **Approval of the Proposal to Expand the Post 16 Learning Space**

The Link Governor for Premises' Report had previously been distributed together with information provided to Governors at the Finance, Leadership & Management Committee. The Link Governor outlined the key reasons for the expansion; the feasibility study should be completed soon and it is hoped that the project will be completed by October this year. It was proposed that a group be set up to take forward the project work, authorised to make necessary decisions as the project moves forward including incurring additional costs up to an additional £90k on top of the £350k previously agreed by the Governing Body.

Governors considered and approved the proposal including appointing John Waldron (Premises Link Governor), Jon Rawlings (Finance Link Governor) and Fiona Elder (Health & Safety Link Governor) to the Working Group with delegated authority to make necessary decisions as outlined above.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Correspondence</b></li> </ul> <p>Governors were pleased to note that a letter had been received from the Rt Hon David Laws MP re the outstanding student outcomes in July. Governors also noted the significant amount of progress students had made which was not included in the letter.</p> <p>Governors asked if the school uses Fischer Family Trust (FFT) when setting targets for students; the Deputy Headteacher confirmed that the school has in the past used FFTD which sets an expectation that the targets are in the top 25% of similar schools, however this is not considered ambitious enough for Redland Green School students.</p>	
4	<p><b>'Knowing Your School'</b></p> <p>Governors had been requested to read the Ofsted Data Dashboard and performance tables documents prior to the meeting. Governors split into small groups to complete a workshop exercise.</p> <p>Governors asked what the school is doing to close the gaps in Mathematics between advantaged and disadvantaged children; the Deputy Headteacher advised that in both Year 10 and Year 11, students are tracked carefully and the Mathematics Department (alongside Heads of House) identify those who need extra teaching. These sessions are run by Mathematics teachers and take place in lunchtime, morning and afternoon registration and after school. Disadvantaged students (Pupil Premium) also receive one to one tutoring in Mathematics, and a member of staff has responsibility for the progress of these students and liaising with parents/carers.</p> <p>Governors asked if the school is exploring opportunities to generate additional funding eg through lettings; the Headteacher advised that unfortunately, the school does not have as many facilities available as other schools to let; the main letting spaces ie the hall and the gym are used for school activities eg for exams, basketball, concerts etc, which makes it challenging. The school does have some lettings at Kellaway Avenue however, in the past the additional use has affected the condition of the pitch which has impacted on the school's own use of the facilities. The Governing Body may want to look at replacing the Astroturf and installing flood lighting as part of the longer term plans so that the facilities can be rented out more; planning permission will need to be sought for the floodlights.</p> <p>Governors asked whether the progress of students with special educational needs (SEN), particularly lower attaining pupils (LAP), impacts on the progress data; the Headteacher confirmed that it does. Last year there were two students who came into school below National Curriculum levels, and although they made progress they did not achieve GCSEs in all subjects. The number of LAP students was low (18) and so the very negative calculation of value added was disproportionately affected. There are a number of students who are functionally illiterate; the school needs to ensure resources are in place to ensure these students achieve. The Headteacher also advised that the school needs to ensure that an appropriate curriculum is in place to support these students. A new teacher has been appointed to provide additional teaching for LAP students alongside strategies that are already in place to support their learning. The school believes that inclusion is very important but the support will include, where appropriate, work in small groups as well as in larger groups.</p> <p>Governors also asked why the absence rate of students on School Action Plus (SA+) is 13% lower than other students; the Headteacher advised that one of the reasons some students are on SA+ is due to their medical needs which could include external support. The school has a very low percentage of persistent non-attenders, although strategies are being reviewed to try to reduce this percentage even further. The Headteacher reassured Governors that all the absences for SA+ students are mainly authorised due to their particular circumstances, however, it is an area that can be further improved. Louise Blundell, Deputy Headteacher has responsibility for overall attendance and meets regularly with the Head of House who also has responsibility for attendance to identify where further strategies can be implemented to support students' attendance.</p>	
5	<p><b>Headteacher's Report</b></p> <p>The report had previously been distributed; the Headteacher explained the current situation with Year 11 students who did not do as well as predicted in the English exams in June partly due to a national issue with marking. The school has decided that for those students who do not have a secure C grade (77 students), based on results so far, they will be entered for the International GCSE (iGCSE) which is very similar to an O Level. Intensive tutoring will also be put in place for 5 days; although the skills required have already been taught, the questions take a different style.</p>	

	<p>Students were informed today and the school will talk with them in assembly tomorrow including that speaking and listening skills are part of the test. A letter will also be sent to parents of those students followed up by a text message; drop in sessions for parents/carers will also be offered. Governors asked if the iGCSE is a recognised qualification; the Headteacher confirmed that it now counted in league tables. Governors fully supported the school's actions and agreed that it was vital that these students achieve a C grade to ensure they are able to access further education opportunities.</p> <p>Governors were pleased to note that the catering team have been awarded the Bronze Food for Life Award; for Silver the catering team needs to grow some foods in school; the grounds maintenance team is looking at opportunities.</p> <p>Governors congratulated Claremont School on their excellent Ofsted outcomes; Governors were also pleased to note that the good working relationship between the schools was noted in the report by Ofsted as exemplary practice.</p> <p>The Kirkland Rowell survey has been distributed to parents/carers of each child in the school; a Governors' Working Group to analyse the findings will need to be set up. The Chair will email Governors when the surveys have been returned.</p> <p>Governors were pleased to note that the school is developing a link with a school in India through the Hope Foundation to support students' understanding of other cultures; the first visit to Redland Green School will take place in May 2013.</p> <p>The school is hoping to achieve the Employability Chartermark; Governors were reminded to provide the Clerk with their employment details.</p>	<p>AW</p> <p>All</p>
<p>6</p>	<p><b>Governors' Report Including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Committee Minutes</b></li> </ul> <p>The draft Committee Minutes had previously been distributed; Governors were requested to read them and direct any comments/questions to the Chairs of the relevant Committees (via the Clerk) before the Committees next meet. The Staff Development Committee met last week; draft Minutes will be distributed in due course.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Performance Management of the Headteacher's Panel Report</b></li> </ul> <p>The Chair outlined the performance management process which includes support from the Secondary School Improvement Officer (SSIO). Governors were pleased to note that the SSIO reported back from the last meeting that the Governors' process was outstanding and a model of good practice; the panel however, feel that there are still areas they would like to improve.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Governor Visits</b></li> </ul> <p>Completed Governor visit forms had previously been distributed from Barry Trahar, Lawayne Jefferson and John Waldron regarding their attendance at the Independent School Food Plan Road Show for the South West of England. Governors were reminded to complete visit forms following visits to the school; the blank form had previously been distributed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Training Undertaken</b></li> </ul> <p>Anthony Ward and Fiona Elder have completed the roles and responsibilities training sessions, modules 1, 2 and 3. John Waldron attended a Governor training session on Best Value; a report had previously been distributed. Governors were encouraged to undertake training. It was suggested that a training form could be drafted so that Governors can feedback, particularly re online training.</p>	<p>EJ</p> <p>All</p> <p>EJ</p>
<p>7</p>	<p><b>Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings &amp; Carried Forward Matters &amp; Matters Arising From Previous Minutes Including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Governing Body's Development Plan (GBDP): Governor Training Day &amp; Next Steps</b></li> </ul> <p>The Minutes dated the 18 December 2012 and 24 January 2013 were agreed and signed as a correct record.</p>	

	A summary of the areas for development identified at the Governor training day had previously been distributed; the Finance, Leadership & Management Committee will now draft a work plan to take forward the actions identified including developing the induction programme; a 'buddying system' has already been established and 'buddies' identified for new Governors linked to Committees. The Finance, Leadership & Management Committee is also working on an annual year planner for the Governing Body.	FL&M
<b>8</b>	<b>AOB</b> Barry Trahar reported that the work for Claremont School's hydrotherapy pool will begin soon with the majority of the work taking place during the summer holidays.	
<b>9</b>	<b>Date &amp; Time of Next FGBM</b> Tuesday 16 July 2013 at 6.30pm	

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

**SIGNED:** ..... **DATE:** 16 July 2013