

MAYFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Meeting of Governing Body Thursday 3rd May 2018 at 6.00pm in the Library

Attendees :-

Judith Greenwood (Chair)
Alison Cox
Sarah Stepney
Jim Thorpe
Kate Vadhia (Clerk)
Jake Holt
Jo Sharpington
Bridget Somekh (to 8.00pm)

Kate Jones
Anna Chaudhri
Mary Wheeler
Paula Ayliffe
Jas Hill (Head)
Jane McHugh
Avi Bhangaonkar (from 6.10pm)

		<u>Action</u>
1.	<p><u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u></p> <p>Apologies were accepted from Anthony Rayner, Petroc MacKenzie-Williams, Zareen Islam and Ed Davison.</p> <p>No apologies had been received from David Hargreaves.</p>	
2.	<p><u>MINUTES & MATTERS ARISING</u></p> <p>16 January 2018 – the minutes were agreed and signed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kate circulated the pecuniary interests file. • Anna had attended the governor briefing and circulated a summary paper to the GB. <p>2 February 2018 – the minutes were agreed and signed.</p> <p>7 March 2018 – the minutes were agreed and signed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The governor section of due diligence has been completed. <p>Avi joined the meeting.</p>	
3.	<p><u>MAT UPDATE</u></p> <p>There was a very long and robust discussion about the MAT.</p> <p>Judith gave a brief outline of the changes in funding affecting MATs ie since starting the MAT process the government has cancelled the Education Services Grant (ESG) to academies and de-delegations to County have got substantially smaller (although this was later agreed to be cost neutral). The sweet spot for MAT finances was previously stated as 2k pupils but this has now increased to 5k pupils. Financial pressure on iTrust would necessitate faster than planned growth whilst CEO and CFO time would remain static at 1 day and 2 days respectively, even with 6 schools on board. Major restructuring of back office functions would be necessary.</p> <p>Rae Snape had successfully bid for a MAT Development and Improvement Fund (MDIF) grant and iTrust had been awarded £83,500 to be spent in Y1. At the steering group's (SG) recent meeting with the Deputy Regional Schools Commissioner (DRSC) he had stated that the chance of being awarded an MDIF was 25% and it was not yet known if the scheme would run next year; it is unlikely the MAT would break even in Y2 and there is no guarantee of another grant.</p> <p>The DRSC had also stated that the DfE was only forcing schools in special measures</p>	

to convert – this is likely to have an impact on the number of schools wishing/needing to join MATs.

In the light of this new landscape Judith, Jas, Sarah and Paula were not minded to go ahead.

Anna had also attended the DRSC meeting. The DRSC said iTrust had done well to be given academy orders and be awarded a substantial MDIF grant. He also thought the pool of potential joiner schools could grow if the Diocese of Ely gave permission for church schools to join MATs other than DMAT. He had given a strong message to consider the landscape in two years' time if we decided not to go ahead.

It was acknowledged that iTrust would be attractive as a primary trust but also that it has to be up and running before other schools can join. The potential for growth is considerable but if the decision is pushed back then iTrust loses credibility, especially with regard to recruiting more schools.

Q: The MAT started with 5 schools but has reduced to 3. Why can't it get back to 5 schools prior to conversion?

A: It is now too late for new schools to catch up, plus any schools joining as founder schools are required to be good or outstanding.

During consultations the school had been clear about not going ahead if the MAT was not financially viable. Two further consultation meetings with other local schools and local councillors had been arranged but there had been no response and no attendance. Other local schools appear to be keeping a watching brief and will not commit until the Trust is formed.

The GB discussed whether the risk going forward in to iTrust was financially acceptable. Is expansion at the necessary rate feasible and practically possible? If iTrust failed to flourish it may be amalgamated with another trust in a few years' time. It was agreed that the iTrust vision is still there but that financial necessity has driven major change in the plans – would this require fresh consultation?

It was noted that Mayfield is currently in a good financial position. According to the paper from Schools' Choice the potential cost to Mayfield in Y2 could be £24,690. The increased cost of Mayfield's contribution could come out of the budget relatively painlessly but is this what is wanted? What is our tolerance for risk? There was concern that the need for rapid expansion could mean some of the additional schools coming on board may not be compatible with the Mayfield ethos. If Mayfield joined an existing MAT it would not have the same level of influence as it would in iTrust and may be asked to contribute more. There was also concern that to achieve that budget the time allocated for management (CEO/CFO) is at an absolute minimum and there would not be funds for external support on financial systems etc.

Q: What could happen in the next few years to cause Mayfield to have to academise?

A: Falling results; a bad Ofsted; the LA no longer capable of supporting maintained schools.

Q: Has Rae changed her view?

A: No, she is still as enthusiastic.

Q: Sponsors from local businesses were mentioned at one time – is this still a possibility?

A: iTrust would welcome sponsors for specific projects but only without obligation on the part of the MAT.

Governors asked about the MDIF grant. It has to be used in Y1, starting in September 2018, and is in ringfenced pots.

The governors discussed the financial summary prepared by Schools' Choice. Jas pointed out that SC had used the total funding pot in their calculations which included money given for deprivation and EAL. She felt this should not be included as it is targeted at particular groups of pupils.

The Leadership Team (LT) expressed concern about the required rate of growth and how this would be balanced with maintaining what we have at Mayfield. Also, having to keep CEO time at 1 day a week would mean Mayfield would not receive some of the support we had been expecting.

Q: Where are we if we decide no? Would this leave us wanting to join with Chesterton?

A: If we wanted to revisit the Chesterton offer we would have to start again. Best course of action is to let the new co-heads settle in and to keep a watching brief to see what's happening. The political focus is on Brexit at the moment. Out of the maintained CB4 schools only one is actively looking at MATs currently. However, it was clear that Mayfield would not want to lose the opportunity to collaborate with Fulbourn and The Spinney on school improvement projects.

The GB agreed that the decision had to be right for Mayfield. There is greater pressure on the MAT than expected and it would be risky to go ahead but nothing is without risk. Rae is a major asset and by not going ahead we could be losing a great opportunity.

Q: What is the opinion of the staff?

A: There is a lot of information to take in and process. No strong views either way have been stated.

We would need to expand to about 12 schools in the space of a few years (current DfE thinking is 12-15 schools). Mayfield is keen to help schools and have them help us but it could be difficult if lots of needy schools join at once. The CEO would be managing a potentially large organisation at a time of rapid growth – difficult in one day.

Judith informed the GB that the chair of the shadow trust board had resigned due to concerns about the financial viability of the MAT.

The GB asked for staff opinions.

- Even during difficult and sometimes fiery meetings with stakeholders it has been clear that everyone involved loves Mayfield and wants the best for it. A lot of time has been spent scrutinising the finances. Two schools have pulled out; the ESG has been discontinued; the National Funding Formula has been introduced; there are rising costs to running a MAT; there is a risk of not obtaining another grant in Y2. Funding figures only became available in March so detailed analysis was not possible before then. There are concerns about both growing too soon and making efficiencies too soon. It is a gamble either way.
- The ethos of the MAT is spot on and is what we want for Mayfield but we don't want this to get lost due to financial pressures.
- Concern about the logistics of rapid expansion; major accounting and system changes and would ideally need to consolidate working together before expanding further.
- It would be good to have the influence of being a founder school and it is a great opportunity for involvement but would want to ensure retained

	<p>ownership.</p> <p>Q: Is federation an option? A: It wasn't when we started this process two years ago but it might be coming back onto the agenda. It would mean having one GB across all the schools with an executive head over heads of schools. It may reduce options later on.</p> <p>Evidence locally of alliances in other forms is that they can be difficult to maintain even when working on a project with funding; some form of formal commitment is necessary for successful collaboration.</p> <p>After some debate about whether or not to vote at this meeting or the next, it was agreed to vote. The motion: 'We are in favour of continuing to work towards the formation of Innovation Trust'. The governors voted 2 for, 12 against with no abstentions.</p> <p>Judith stressed the need for confidentiality until the next SG meeting. She thanked Jas, Kate, Anna and Jo Sharpington for their hard work during this process. Everyone else thanked Judith for her hard work. It was agreed that the process was not to be regretted; it had increased everyone's knowledge, there have already been benefits from working closely together and Mayfield will continue to work with the other two schools. The GB felt very positive about what Mayfield has now and the very good state in which Jas is handing over the school.</p>	Action
4.	<p><u>GOVERNOR ISSUES</u></p> <p>Mentors were assigned to the new governors: Alison to mentor Anthony and Jim to mentor Ed.</p>	
5.	<p><u>HEADTEACHER'S REPORT</u></p> <p>Deferred to the next meeting.</p>	Judith/Kate
6.	<p><u>REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES</u></p> <p>Finance – Kate took the GB through the previously circulated budget and notes. £56,932 of the £149,227 carryforward to be used to balance the budget. After committed items are accounted for this leaves reserves of £44,737. Spending plans will be put forward in September when the co-heads start. Mayfield will be undertaking a review of TA pay grades as other schools pay on a higher level. It may cost about £17k to bring Mayfield TAs in line.</p> <p>The budget was unanimously adopted.</p> <p>P&A – minutes of the recent meeting had been circulated.</p> <p>Personnel – at the last meeting the committee had been concerned about stress and workload especially with regard to the MAT. The committee is required to review a lot of policies and Bridget thanked the committee members for their preparation before meetings, freeing up time to discuss important issues.</p> <p>P&PW – meeting in a couple of weeks. Some parents have requested to attend the P&PW meeting to talk about food policy. It was decided Alison would meet with them. Jas to forward her response to recent emails to Alison.</p> <p>Bridget left the meeting.</p>	Alison/Jas

7.	<p><u>PARENT COUNCIL UPDATE</u></p> <p>At their recent meeting the Parent Council agreed the need to think about how the council moves forward to become more representative of the parent voice.</p>	<u>Action</u>
8.	<p><u>PTA UPDATE</u></p> <p>The summer fair is on June 21st and plans are coming along nicely.</p>	
12.	<p><u>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</u></p> <p>The subjects to be discussed at the next meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headteacher's report • What Makes a School (deferred from this meeting) • Focus on Pupil Premium • Planning for next year. 	

The meeting closed at 8.08pm.