

MAYFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Meeting of Full Governing Body Monday September 25th 2017 at 6.00pm in the Staff Room

Attendees :-

Judith Greenwood (Chair)
Kate Vadhia (Clerk)
Jas Hill (Head Teacher)
Sarah Stepney
Bridget Somekh
Kate Jones

Mary Wheeler
Jane McHugh
Petroc Mackenzie-Williams
Alison Cox
Anna Chaudhri

Action

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were accepted from Jim Thorpe, Zareen Islam, Paula Ayliffe, Avi Bhangaonkar, Jo Sharpington and David Hargreaves.

2. PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest relating to any items on the agenda.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

4 May 2017 – agreed as correct and signed.

6 June 2017 – agreed as correct and signed.

4. MATTERS ARISING

4 May 2017

- Kate to run another parent governor election as the previous one was unsuccessful.
- Bridget had produced a letter to be sent out with exit questionnaires. Personnel to look at whether different versions of the letter were necessary.

Kate

Bridget/
Kate

6 June 2017

- Jas to write a post-Ofsted action plan which will be incorporated into the new SDP.

Jas

5. GOVERNOR ISSUES

Register of Pecuniary Interests – the file was circulated for governors to check and update their entry.

GB Code of Conduct – the GB approved the code of conduct with no amendments.

Committee Terms of Reference – every committee had reviewed their ToR and the document was approved by the GB. The GB removed 7.3 from the Salary Committee ToR and approved them.

Committee & Link Governor Lists - Jane became the link governor for EAL and also joined the Salaries committee.

GB Dates – the GB agreed the previously circulated dates for full GB and committee meetings for the academic year.

Governor Expenses Policy – the policy was reviewed. There were no changes. It was noted that it was important that governors know they can apply for expenses.

GB Vacancies

- Rob Thompson had been disqualified due to non-attendance at meetings without apologies for more than 6 months. Kate had written to him.
- David's term of office expires in early October. Judith had spoken with him about staying on and the GB unanimously voted to co-opt him.
- There are two co-opted vacancies and two parent governor vacancies. Kate to run a parent governor election. Governors to approach people who may be interested in becoming a governor.
- Bridget to remain on the HTPM committee for a third year. David to lead from the next appraisal cycle.

Standing Orders – the GB reviewed and agreed the standing orders.

Attendance at Governor Briefings – it was agreed that one or two governors would attend each termly briefing and report back to the full GB.

6. **GOVERNOR TRAINING**

Anna had attended the recent Governor Briefing and gave the governors an overview of the main points. Kate to circulate her notes.

Kate

7. **HEADTEACHER'S REPORT**

The previously circulated report was taken as read.

- Pupil numbers have dropped slightly in FS and Y2. Housebuilding has started at Darwin Green and people are now moving into the Eddington development; Mayfield numbers may rise as a consequence.
- A higher than usual number of pupils left Mayfield to return abroad during the last academic year.
- Most Y6 pupils move on to Chesterton. At their recent Ofsted inspection Chesterton were graded Outstanding; Jas has written to congratulate them.
- eFSM number have now increased to 52.
- SEN – the number of children with Education Health & Care Plans (EHCP) may potentially increase to 22. The school is already supporting the 4 children with applications pending. SEN Support numbers are falling which is a reflection of a more proactive and rigorous approach to moving children off the register.
- Overall it has been a smooth start to the school year.

Child Protection

- Audit – the previously circulated audit was taken as read.
- Q21 – Jas is investigating online e-Safety training, of which she was previously unaware, and has entered January 2018 for now.
- Q26 – the eSafety policy is due for review.
- Q33 – it was noted that favourable Ofsted comments could also have been cited as a source of evidence.

Jas

Jas

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy – the GB reviewed and discussed the previously circulated policy. The policy was unanimously adopted.

8. **REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES**

Finance

- Jim Thorpe is now Chair of Finance.
- There is not enough money – the school has only just managed to balance the budget using last year's carryforward. However, the position is improving due to staff changes, secondment and other income and £1k per year from Aspens because they are now catering for Brunswick Nursery from the Mayfield kitchen.
- Sarah is covering Jo Caisová's secondment and Paula is doing some work in other schools; the school must be careful not to overstretch the leadership team.

Personnel

- Following a detailed discussion at their recent meeting Personnel had unanimously recommended that the 2017 teacher cost of living pay rise be set at 2% for MSI and 1% for all other teachers. This was felt to be the fairest outcome for everyone.
- The committee had considered the impact of the MAT project on staff stress levels and found that there were currently no issues. Jas and Judith have borne the brunt of the extra workload so far.
- Policy reviews are up to date
- Pay Policy – Finance had supported the Personnel committee's recommendations. The only changes to the pay policy were updates of the payscales in the appendices. The GB unanimously voted to approve the policy.

P&A

- Met at the end of the summer term.
- P&A to compose a letter to parents re the 2017 SATs results.

P&PW

- The community room was painted over the summer holidays.
- The committee carried out a link visit on outdoor learning during the summer term and the report will be circulated after their next meeting.

SDP Update – the new SDP will be produced after the priorities have been finalised. The SDP to run for one year due to the potential MAT.

9. **MULTI ACADEMY TRUSTS**

Further to the resolution passed by the GB in March to “apply to the Secretary of State to convert to academy status with the intention of joining with The Spinney to form a new Multi-Academy Trust with other primary schools.” the steering group are waiting on information from the DfE before completing the application form which they hope to do in mid October. Due diligence of all the schools will then be carried out by Schools Choice and the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) will also scrutinise the application. The RSC has 5 to 6 weeks in which to decide if they will approve the application. The conversion isn't final until the papers are signed; if the due diligence identified as yet unknown issues Mayfield could withdraw at that time.

David/
Zareen

The joint meeting with the governing bodies and heads of The Spinney and Fulbourn Primary had brought up concerns and issues. Judith had collated and considered all of the feedback received. Judith took the GB through the paper she had circulated just prior to the meeting. The financial implications of the MAT are a very big concern to several governors. Judith explained that the current shortfall of £65k per year is from a first, rough draft of the MAT costs and savings. Due diligence will analyse each school's finances and the outcome of this is not yet known. If, after due diligence, the finances projections are poor then the MAT would not go ahead.

Sponsorships from local companies, as mentioned by the Chair of Fulbourn GB, had caused concern amongst the Mayfield GB. Judith clarified that the MAT would not be relying on sponsors for financial viability but that sponsorship would be for discrete projects with no obligation on the side of the MAT.

The GB discussed the Members. One potential member had dropped out due to other commitments. Of the five appointed four were local to Cambridge. Judith explained that it is considered better governance to have independent members who are not also on the Board of Directors of the MAT. The RSC and/or the DfE would step in if members or directors "go rogue". All the members are unpaid and additionally are well known in their professional spheres and would be protective of their personal reputations. The members and the board of directors would evolve over time in the same way that a governing body would. Some directors have experience of governance in other local schools. A rigorous approach to honing the scheme of delegation will ensure as many safeguards as possible are put into place.

With regard to expansion, the directors can refuse to take on another school. However, part of the CIT vision is a school improvement programme and this could involve taking over a struggling school. There may also be the opportunity to take on a new school such as that at Darwin Green.

It was agreed that the climate has been increasingly challenging for stand alone schools over the past few years and that this situation is likely to worsen as LAs have less money and provide fewer services. It has been difficult for some staff and governors to embrace the idea of academies and MATs but governors agreed that Mayfield had to be pragmatic about the future while focusing on the original reasons for considering a MAT. It was felt that while there will undoubtedly be tough decisions to be made in the future, the MAT would give some protection to the member schools. Everyone agreed that the good bits of Mayfield must not be lost.

Judith invited governors to submit more questions and thoughts as they occurred to them.

After considerable discussion, including of those issues raised by governors unable to be present, the GB confirmed their previous resolution to apply to the Secretary of State to convert to academy status with the intention of joining with The Spinney to form a new Multi-Academy Trust with other primary schools subject to due diligence. The next step is to complete the application form once information has been received from the DfE. The draft application will

be circulated to all governors during the week commencing 2nd October and there will be an opportunity to meet with Jas and Judith for discussion during the w/c 9th October.

10. **PARENT COUNCIL REMIT**

The GB reviewed the Parent Council Terms of Reference; there were no changes. The Parent Council will continue during the MAT process as an important channel of communication.

11. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The GB decided on the following news items for the staff and parents newsletters:

At their meeting on 25th September the GB:

- Expressed their delight that the PTA has new members and a committee.
- Discussed the next steps in the MAT process. The heads and governing bodies of the three schools (Mayfield, The Spinney Primary and Fulbourn Primary) had met.
- The GB are looking for governors, particularly those who can bring some finance experience. This is a very exciting time to be a governor as there are some far-reaching decisions to be made about Multi-Academy Trusts. No previous experience of school governance is necessary and training is available. The governors are a very welcoming and friendly bunch. If you are interested or know someone who is, please contact Kate Vadhia at kvadhia@mayfield.cambs.sch.uk or via the school office.

The next strategy meeting to focus on the MAT scheme of delegation.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm