

**MEADOW VIEW PRIMARY SCHOOL
MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY (VIA ZOOM)
13TH OCTOBER 2020 AT 5.PM**



MINUTES

Present – T White (Chair), J Logan, J West, K Bromley, A Boyle,
T Davidson-Hague, M Khan
In attendance – A Blench (Clerk), K Taylor (SBM), D Silvester (CEO Jmat)

FGB1.APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 To accept apologies for absence. No apologies were offered as all were present.

FGB2.DECLARATION OF PERSONAL AND BUSINESS INTEREST

2.1 Individual governors to declare any personal or business interests on any item
On the agenda. No declarations were made.

FGB3.ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

3.1 Election of chair.

Governors unanimously elected T White as Chair.

3.2 Election of vice-chair

Governors unanimously elected J West as Vice Chair.

FGB4.ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

4.1 Chair to determine any items of urgent business for consideration under FGB13
below. None identified.

FGB5. ACADEMISATION UPDATE

5.1 Presentation by D Silvester CEO James Montgomery Academy Trust (JMAT)

TW reminded governors of Zoom meeting protocols. TW also welcomed Maaria Khan as a new co-opted governor.

TW welcomed David Silvester, CEO of James Montgomery Academy Trust, to the meeting who had been invited to attend in order to provide an update regarding academisation plans.

TW acknowledged that a number of the current governing body were not members when school made the decision to academise and to join the JMAT group of schools. TW offered to share with any governor minutes from previous meetings where the decision to academise was made. TW stressed that the focus of tonight's discussion was about our future plans and not about looking back to review the reasons why we made the decision.

DS addressed a number of questions he had been given to consider before the meeting.

Governor question - What is the latest on the conversion date?

The date which the DfE are using in February 2021.

Governor question – what is the latest about the progress on the conversion process for MVP?

JMAT has had several schools at various stages of the joining process and taking varying lengths of time to complete this. For MVP this is currently out of our hands and is waiting for a legal process to be completed relating to the PFI contract. This needs parties who are based in Switzerland and Canada to complete their work. There is also a legal and paperwork process which the LA, DfE and solicitors need to progress. For a school in Doncaster the whole process took 6 months. It seems that for Rotherham schools this can take a lot longer. After having lodged a complaint with the LA about the lack of progress things are now starting to move. It appears that Rotherham LA had not started their part of the process until recently. All of the legal documentation has to be with the DfE the month before the conversion date.

Governor question – what confidence do you have in this date?

There is one outstanding issue between the LA and the PFI contractor. Normally a letter would be submitted to the PFI contractor 1 year before conversion which would typically involve work to the cost of £1,400. 12 months later this cost has escalated to £25,000. RMBC are saying that they won't pay this. The DfE is in negotiation with the PFI contractor to get a resolution. RMBC believe that 1st February 2020 is a possible date but won't pay £25,000 for this to happen. This is where we are held up, but we are confident that this will be resolved.

Governor question – how does the MVP governing body fit into the JMAT structures?

The local governing body will stay as it is now and all existing governors will transfer across, unless any individual governor doesn't want to do this. The governing body will have a strategic focus on school improvement and ensuring that resources are used well. You will make decisions on behalf of MVP.

Governor question – what is the role of the JMAT directors?

They are there as a back stop, to step in if you run into difficulties. The kinds of scenarios where this might happen is if you can't find an answer to budget difficulties, or unresolved safeguarding issues or get placed into Ofsted special measures. This is no different from what the LA does and has the power to do now. The LGB fits as it is now. The trust will never move to a control model as this takes away the local voice which is very important.

Governor question – will the LA appointed governor go?

Yes, but the person currently filling that place will transfer across and be called a 'Foundation Governor'. This will follow the constitution as it is now. Co-opted roles can be used as well.

It was noted that JMAT is providing useful support to school already.

Governor question – the top slice, what does this pay for?

The trust has recently made some changes in what it rolls into the deal. Previously it was a core service and then schools could opt in for additional aspects and pay an additional charge for the additional aspects. We are now looking at including the optional extras in the core charge.

DS showed governors a short video presentation and shared his screen to do this. The presentation explained how the top slice will work.

The charge is 5.5% of school budget share, excluding grants (PP, PE premium, SEN). This is lower than a lot of other MATS charge.

Now everything is included. JL can show governors what she gets as this is happening now even though we haven't converted as yet. DS said the trust had benchmarked its offer against other trusts and encouraged governors to do the same. This information is available on their websites.

Governor question – is the RoSiS subscription included?

Yes, and this is at a reduction as for any subscription we are able to negotiate a reduction as we are purchasing for 17 schools at one time. DS agreed to send the slide presentation to governors for viewing later. DS left the meeting at this point (17:47)

FGB6.RESOURCES

6.1 To receive an update on the 2020 21 School Budget.

KT explained to governors the improved budget position. We are no longer in a deficit situation this year due to gaining additional children we were not expecting in the Foundation Unit.

KT mentioned that she had been working closely with Peter Haynes (CFO at JMAT) and that they know our financial position. KT and Peter are working together to

produce a 3-year budget forecast. We know that the future is looking very challenging and this is driven by reducing pupil numbers.

Governor question – will he produce scenarios for us based upon best and worst outcomes?

KT expressed the view that it is better to work with what we know for definite. Academies do finances and budgeting differently from an LA school and this has been a big learning curve for KT.

It was stated that as an academy we have to have a 3-year budget. The estimates show a dip in funding over the 3 years. JL and KT are working on a pupil attraction plan. There has been a 29% drop in pupil numbers in recent years.

Governor question – is the same trend seen across all Rotherham schools?

No, it varies across the authority area. Wath for example is seeing a lot of new family housing being built and there is a demand for places. This is an issue for schools in this corner of Rotherham.

Governor question – do we have an idea of when we can see a 3-year plan presented to governors?

We don't have a timeline currently. It was agreed that TW will continue this discussion with JL and KT outside of the meeting. TW stressed that this was an important issue and that we don't want to get to a point where the school becomes unviable. It was suggested that Peter Haynes could be invited to a future meeting. This wouldn't be the November meeting as Elliott from Engie had been invited to that one. It was noted that DS was impressed by the budget which KT had presented to JMAT. The predicted outturn figure for this year is a credit balance of £19,998.

The main difference has been that when we set the budget, we didn't have a full F1. Some parents don't seem to decide to send their children to us until September anyway. This isn't an unusual situation for our area and private nurseries have spaces as well. We have cut spending wherever we can and have factored in covid costs. This will affect staffing levels at some point. We have lost a lot of income from lettings due to covid, roughly £17,500.

Governor question – universal infant free school meals funding has gone down?

Yes, this is due to the reduction in numbers. We are seeing more families applying for FSM and these increased numbers will be picked up in the January 2021 census. We always check this as pupils move from F1 into F2 as this is the point when the two systems swap over and encourage parents to apply. Last year's Y6 had a high number of PP students.

Governor question – is the 5.5% top slice payment included in the budget?

Yes, but not as DS described. We are 3.5% plus additional charges. This will change from December 2019 onwards.

Governor question – do governors need to approve this budget or is it for information?

This needs approval as it is the October revised budget forecast. Governors approved the revised budget forecast with the provision that a 3-year budget plan is ready for discussion at a future FGB Meeting.

6.2 Approval of School Private Funds Audit 2019 20.

The audit report was not ready for governors. This item was deferred to the next meeting.

Actions – JL/KT to clarify with P Haynes the timeframe for a Revised 3-year budget plan and options to be available for consideration by governors.

FGB7.COVID UPDATES

7.1 Update on the opening of school to all children

Governor question – if children arrive to school late do they get recorded as being in attendance?

If after 9.30am they get a U code which is another kind of attendance mark.

Governors said that the attendance figures looked very good at the moment. Absence due to covid related effects isn't counted against the school in a negative way. JL stated that there is 1 pupil who has an attendance of 50% due to covid. Any covid absences are recorded differently and school will not pursue parents for covid related absence reasons. Governors understood that covid absences wont effect schools standing in the league tables but would nevertheless like to have sight of these absences as they will affect pupil progress in the longer term.

7.2 Review and approval of any revision to risk assessment/s.

Governors approved the revised risk assessment which had been shared with them prior to the meeting.

Actions – JL to provide governors with updates on covid related absences for pupils.

7.3 Update on plans for home learning

The Home Learning document had been shared with governors for information and not for approval by governors. If a pupil is absent, then from day 2 of the absence home learning is sent out. The material emulates what is happening in school but will not be the same as some activities need resources which families won't have access to at home. This is the best alternative we can provide and accesses online resources such as Oak Academy. If there should be a full school closure, we will revert back to what we did in April/May.

The current timetable for home learning equates to 3 hours per day structured learning.

Governor question – are the children completing it?

Yes, but we are still learning to find the best ways of supporting this. Teachers aren't at the end of the phone or an email as we were during lockdown. We can't guarantee an acknowledgement in the same way as before as teachers are in class now.

FGB8.ARRANGEMENTS FOR APPROVAL OF POLICIES

8.1 To remind governors of the arrangements for approval of policies – TW

TW stated that the GB had fallen behind with its timetable for review and approval of statutory/mandatory policies due to covid. Our previous way of handling these had led to agenda being clogged up with policies for approval. What we had agreed before was that 1 or 2 governors would lead on reviewing each policy which matched with their special role. After this review they would come to the whole GB for sign off. All policy documents are based upon generic RMBC or JMAT documents and then customised for MVP. The personalised wording will be in yellow for ease of reference.

8.2 Arrangements for the approval of the Pay Policy and Appraisal Policy

The pay policy will be considered at the next meeting as it had only been received a few days before the meeting from RMBC, which didn't give governors chance to review it.

JL asked governors to consider some wording in the appraisal policy which covers teacher and head teacher appraisal. Currently TW and JW have conducted the head teacher's appraisal (assisted by an external advisor) and reviewed the teacher pay recommendations with the Head. Now that TW is chair this arrangement needs reviewing as the Chair shouldn't do both. It was agreed that additional governors would be trained in the appraisal processes and that TDH and KB would assist with this process going forwards.

MK left the meeting at this point.

FGB9.SAFEGUARDING UPDATE (HEADLINES)

9.1 Brief update on any safeguarding action or concerns

JL gave governors a brief update. All new staff and SMSA had received full safeguarding training today, so now all staff are up to date. This year school has moved from using CPOMS to Safeguard as a piece of software within which safeguarding concerns and actions can be recorded. Safeguard has some online training which is appropriate for governors to complete. It was agreed that KT will set up access for all governors so they can complete this.

9.2 Arrangements for the annual safeguarding update

Debra Whelan from JMAT is working in school at the moment and is completing this audit for us. This will be covid compliant as well.

Governor question – when will the audit be ready for governors to see?

At the next meeting.

Actions – KT to set up governors within safeguard so they can access the training. AB to add safeguarding audit to next meeting agenda.

FGB10.MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING & MATTERS ARISING

10.1 Approval of the minutes of the meeting of the full governing body – 16th September 2020 and the meeting of the strategic planning committee 8th September 2020.

The minutes of both meetings were approved.

10.2 Matters arising – not included elsewhere in the meeting agenda

10.3 PE Premium Plan 2020 21 – update JL

The racetrack option needs to be approved by governors once they know the detail of this proposal. KT will bring this to governors at the November meeting. Cfd.

10.4 PP Plan – revision to dates and figures completed? – update JL. JL to send out revised document. Cfd.

10.5 TW to write governor content for DEP – update TW. Completed.

10.6 TW/JL to work on wording for DEP around sustainability/budget/pupil numbers – update JL/TW. JMAT have stated that this doesn't need to go on the DEP but needs to be monitored instead. Closed.

10.7 Confirmation of DT appointment as parent governor – TW. It was agreed that TW will write to DT giving a deadline for submission of ID docs. If the deadline isn't met, then the place will be withdrawn.

10.8 Recruitment of parent governor – TW. This will depend upon the outcome from 10.7. We need to know if looking for 1 or 2. Cfd.

10.9 ABL to send governors the skills audit questionnaire – update ABL. Completed, not all have been returned.

10.10 ABL to update and publish the code of conduct – update ABL. Completed.

10.11 ABL to send governors the declaration of business and pecuniary interest form – update ABL. Completed. Not all have been returned.

FGB11.ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

11.1 None identified.

FGB12. CONFIDENTIALITY

12.1 To determine any confidential items. None identified.

FGB13. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

13.1 Full Governing Body Meeting – 17th November 2020 @ 5pm