

**MEADOW VIEW PRIMARY SCHOOL
MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY
24TH APRIL 2018 AT 4.45PM**



MINUTES

Present: B Vickerage, K Smith, T White, N Lee, J West, K Bromley, J Newbolt, A Boyle, D Everett

In Attendance: A Blench, K Taylor, T Keenan, J Logan

FGB23. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 23.1 To accept apologies for absence. All present.

FGB24. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL AND BUSINESS INTEREST

- 24.1 Individual governors to declare any personal or business interests on any item On the agenda. K Smith mentioned that she is a governor of a Sheffield secondary school. J Long mentioned that her husband works at a JMAT school. J Newbolt mentioned that she works at a New Dawn Trust school. B Vickerage mentioned that he is vice chair of governors at Winterhill academy. K Taylor mentioned that she is chair of governors at a JMAT school.

FGB25. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

- 25.1 Chair to determine any items of urgent business for consideration under FGB27 below. No items were identified.

FGB26. GOVERNOR FEEDBACK FROM RECENT JAMES MONTGOMERY ACADEMY TRUST (JMAT) PRESENTATION

- 26.1 Governors to share impressions from the recent presentation and bring any questions.
The chair started by encouraging everyone to be open and respectful towards each other. It was acknowledged that governors may have differing opinions on the JMAT presentation. Governors were reminded that the decision to join with JMAT was one for governors to make collectively. Whilst the input of the wider SLT to this decision is invaluable, constitutionally it is a governor decision.
K Smith mentioned that she had known about JMAT for some time, but had not investigated further as we were exploring our options with New Dawn Trust (NDT). Her conclusion now was that everything school could have got from NDT it can now

get from JMAT. JMAT has a layer of accountability for each school to the wider MAT community. Governor question – do you know the people at JMAT are they strong in what they do? The trustees have real credibility because of their professional backgrounds. The employed SIP partners are known to MVP because they also do work for RoSiS. They all have children at the heart of what they do. If we join JMAT we will keep our school identity.

The trust has a Northern Group of schools whose last Ofsted Inspection ratings were – 4 good, 1 outstanding and 2 requires improvement. In the Southern Group there are 5 with good, and 2 outstanding. These are results that we aspire to. We have got inclusion working well here and now need to look at how we support HA pupils at the top end. Reading is an area where we haven't got to national level. Some of the JMAT schools have and we can learn from them.

Levy and Savings – it was mentioned that the 3% saving in costs achieved by schools joining the trust might be more difficult to achieve for a PFI school like MVP. K Smith and K Taylor mentioned that they had done a survey of the top slice paid to JMAT and how savings might be achieved. A paper copy of the findings was distributed at the meeting. Governor question – can we have a different deal around the top slice as a PFI school? What top slice do we pay to the LA at the moment? K Smith and K Taylor explained the assumed savings line by line. Stressing that some of the suggested savings may be higher than their estimates. Governor question – how have we worked out these savings figures? Would we keep our own catering staff if we joined JMAT? It was explained that the catering staff are part of the 25 year PFI contract and would stay with this. It was explained that some of current services would still need to be bought in from existing providers, albeit at a reduced level of cover as JMAT doesn't do everything that school might need. It was mentioned that there could be a saving on the employer's pension contribution of between £10,000 and £19,000. Governor question – do other PFI schools make savings when they join a MAT? No they don't because they are also tied into the PFI contract for a long time. Governor question – what is LSS? This is the Learner Support Service and includes things like Educational Psychologist input. Both are buy backs from the LA at the moment. The learning community is investigating buying a dedicated Ed Psych for our schools. It was mentioned that the National Funding Formula (NFF) for schools will be implemented in full next year by Rotherham LA.

Governors were encouraged to not get tied up in trying to understand what the levy cost and what savings could be made by joining JMAT. Whilst this is important the main thing is to focus upon what we would gain in other areas by joining. The key question is will joining move the school forward? Will it make a difference to our pupils? A governor expressed the view that they didn't know enough to be able to make a decision. K Smith asked the governors to ask as many questions as they wanted to enable them to understand. She explained that MVP had been looking at and researching various academy trusts over the last 3 years. A governor expressed the view that JMAT was a well-structured trust with excellent people working for it. Governor question – is this a decision we can think about and come back to in a few months' time? The chair stated that governors needed to make a decision in this meeting in principle as to whether we wanted to start the process of joining JMAT or not. He expressed the view that school had been looking at this for a long time and that we could be looking at this forever if we weren't careful. Governor question – how long has this MAT been formed? It was explained that they had been a MAT for 2 years, but that the schools had been working together informally outside of a MAT for 5 or 6 years. Governor question – when will we get our next Ofsted inspection visit? It could be next year, but this isn't about Ofsted but about making a choice

rather than being forced to join a MAT not of our own choosing. It could be that if the majority of the schools in the LA become MATs the government could insist that the remaining schools convert. JMAT will only take in another 2 or 3 schools as it doesn't have ambitions to be any bigger than this. There is a danger that if we don't go with them now this opportunity will be lost.

K Smith explained how Ofsted inspections work for academy schools. When schools convert to academy status they get a new DfE number even though they are the same school. The old school closes on the day before conversion day and starts afresh with Ofsted. They will get a visit as a new academy by the third year. Some academy schools haven't been inspected since 2013. A governor mentioned that she had done some research into the performance of 7 of the schools in JMAT. Generally their results were above national averages. There was a high % of attainment with 24% reading at high level. Governor question – what does JMAT do to deliver these results? This is where the teaching consultants make their impact in training staff and raising standards. Members of the SLT had already attended meetings where they had seen the JMAT consultants at work. If we were a member of JMAT we could invite them into our school to work with us on specific aspects of the curriculum. It was explained that the trust runs regular training events and termly workshops in subject specific areas. There would be something for everyone to access in terms of CPD.

Staffing concerns – Governor Question – as a non-teaching member of staff at MVP I am concerned that I will lose my job, along with other support staff? It was explained that no one will lose their jobs on transfer to the academy trust. This is because of a piece of employment legislation called T.U.P.E. which protects everyone's employment and their terms and conditions of employment on transfer. It was explained that JMAT would be the employer, not the LA. No one will be forced to relocate or make any changes they don't want to make. It was explained that there will be more opportunities for everyone to apply for across JMAT. This could be secondments or permanent vacancies. As JMAT has an adopted national terms and conditions any new vacancies will be in line with what is expected. A governor explained her own experience of going through a TUPE transfer which was very straightforward. The only difference noticed was that the new employer didn't pay for time off for medical appointments. It was pointed out that there is actually no entitlement to be paid for time off in the current contract and that this was at the discretion of the head teacher. Governor question – support staff in schools have not had a pay raise for 2 years now and have suffered under the austerity measures of the last 7 to 8 years. The unions have recently agreed a pay deal for us. Will JMAT pay this? It was explained that JMAT has agreed to pay national rates so yes it will be honoured. Governor question – could this change in the future? It was explained that the position could change in the future as it also could with the LA. There could also be changes in government policy. So no one can make a guarantee that things won't change.

Governance concerns – will MVP get a say in how things are run? Yes the Local Governing Body will run the school as is the case now. There will be a document put in place called a scheme of delegation which explains where decision making sits for various aspects of school. What sits with the board of trustees and what belongs to the local governing body? Our governing body will see this document and get an opportunity to comment on it before signing up. Governor question – how does the due diligence process work? JMAT will look at us to see if we are viable. They will look at pupil data, systems and finances. We will do the same for them as well. The Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) has the final say on the decision. Even of MVP and JMAT are happy to go ahead it will still need the RSC input. Governor

question – how long is the process? 6 months but may take longer as we are PFI. Possibly 9 – 12 months.

Conversion process – A Blench mentioned that the ESFA works to a strict timetable and that certain documents have to be filed with them by key dates. He agreed to seek a copy of this timetable. It was mentioned that there would be a formal consultation process with staff and that this would be handled centrally. Staff would have a channel of directing concerns which would not be via a Staff Governor. There would also be a parent consultation process and it was also important to understand that this isn't directed through parent governors.

Governor question – is there a way we could seek the views of current parents of a JMAT school? J Long explained that her children attend JMAT schools. Her feedback was that each school keeps its own personality and identity. The emphasis is upon nurturing each child. There is a class Doji, through which she regularly receives feedback. She attended the parent consultation meetings for the conversion. She feels this isn't an issue for MVP. Governor question – there are several Church of England Schools in JMAT, would we be allowed to keep our non-faith position? Yes, each school has its own identity and values. K Taylor explained that in her experience as a governor in a JMAT school that the local governing body kept its local powers over things like HR and staffing. B Vickerage stressed that the local governing board in a JMAT school would have an even more important role as it would start to relate to the board of the trust in a direct manner. JMAT seems to have the right balance of local and centralised functions. Governor question – would we still use Rotherham HR? Yes we could. But we have the choice now to use them or not. Governor question – would we be able to influence which central contracts JMAT signs up to? Yes, but JMAT will want some consistency and we will have to fall in line to enable savings to be realised. Governor question – can we trust that they will make contract decisions which aren't just based upon price? Yes we can, but we also have a voice and can feedback if we aren't happy.

Summary – B Vickerage thanked everyone for their comments and input. It had been a useful debate and shows that we have listened to everyone's concerns. There appear to be lots of positives from governors. He recognised that for some governors JMAT might not have the 'wow factor' that they had picked up from visiting other schools. But perhaps we were looking at the wrong things? Should we be seeking a 'wow factor'? He had visited 3 schools in JMAT and had spoken to staff who had all spoken positively about their experiences. K Smith also said that other Head teachers working in JMAT schools were very positive about the support they had received from JMAT. The chair stressed the confidential nature of the discussions tonight and that nothing must be shared outside of the meeting. It was agreed by the entire governing body that school will start the process of joining JMAT/due diligence and that regular reports on this process will be brought to governors meetings. Governor visits – it was agreed that K Smith will arrange for some governor visits to JMAT schools.

FGB27. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

- 27.1 To consider any other urgent items. None given.

FGB28. CONFIDENTIALITY

- 28.1 To determine any confidential items. The entire agenda is confidential.

FGB29 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

29.1 1st May SIP Curriculum, 15th May Finance Premises and Staffing, 12th June SIP Curriculum, 26th June Finance Premises and Staffing, 10th July Full Governing Body, 17th July Full Governing Body (Data)