

Kirklees Directorate for Children & Adults

THE FEDERATED GOVERNING BODY OF KIRKROYDS INFANT AND WOOLDALE JUNIOR SCHOOL

Minutes of the Extra – Ordinary meeting of the Governing Body held at 7:00 pm at the Wooldale Junior School on Wednesday, 1 March 2017.

Present:

Miss D Whiteley (Chair), Mrs V Baldwin, Mrs L Counce, Dr L Fleming, Mrs G Holden, Mrs C Mills, Mr S Rodgers, Mrs R Starrett, Mr S Talbot, Mrs M White, Mrs C Wood (Head teacher)

In Attendance:

Miss S Cartledge (Minute Clerk)
Mrs A Barnes (Associate Member, Deputy Head teacher)
Mrs C L Armitage (Deputy Head teacher)
Mr P Thompson (Independent Advisor)

Agenda Item	Discussion and Decisions	Action – who / by
441.	<p>Miss D Whiteley advised governors that the reason for the extraordinary meeting was to discuss Multi Academy Trusts and the working party meetings herself and the Head teacher had been attending along with the Holme Valley Schools. This meeting would be to come to a conclusion of how to proceed and the feedback the Federation of Kirkroyds Infant & Wooldale Junior Schools will give to the rest of the working party.</p> <p><u>Apologies for Absence, Consent and Declaration of Interest</u></p> <p>Apologies were received from Mr S Cressey and Canon J S Robertshaw.</p>	
442.	<p><u>Notification of items to be brought up under Any Other Business</u></p> <p>There were no items to be raised under any other business.</p>	
443.	<p><u>Representation</u></p> <p>Miss D Whiteley advised that Mr S Rodgers wished to be seated on the governing body for another term of office. However, due to work commitments he would be unable to attend the next few meetings. Miss D Whiteley enquired whether governors would be happy for Mr S Rodgers to be re-co-opted onto the governing body with consideration of his current circumstances.</p> <p>Agreed: That governors are happy to given consent for Mr S Rodgers be re-appointed and non-attendance to the next few meetings.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That Mr S Rodgers be co-opted on to the governing body following his end of term of office.</p>	Governor Clerking Service

	<p>Miss D Whiteley advised that there was 1 co-opted vacancy left as a result of Mr M Galloway coming to his end of term of office and due to work commitments had decided that he would be unable to commit to another term of office.</p> <p>Governors acknowledged that Mrs C L Armitage had also come to her end of term of office as a Co-opted (staff) governor leaving another vacancy. The Head teacher informed governors that 2 other members of staff had expressed their interests but had since decided to not go to ballot, resulting in Mrs C L Armitage standing for another term of office.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That Mrs C L Armitage be co-opted on to the governing body following her end of term of office.</p> <p>The Head teacher advised that 1 of the candidates had expressed that they would like to become an associate member on the governing body. However, this could result in the staff ratio on the governing body becoming 'top heavy' with school staff.</p>	Governor Clerking Service
444.	<p><u>Multi Academy Trust – Moving Forward</u></p> <p>Miss D Whiteley reported that herself and the Head teacher had been attending meetings held by the high school to explore the advantages and disadvantages of being part of a Multi Academy Trusts. Miss D Whiteley advised that the next meeting would be held the following week at the High School and there was the expectation of schools attending stating the next steps of whether they would like to pursue matters further.</p> <p>The Head teacher and Miss D Whiteley advised that they had visited Netherthong, where a parent at the school is also a governor at a MAT in Sheffield and reported that the parent originally was very sceptical of the idea of a MAT. However, this had changed for him and he was now very pro-academisation. This parent had explained that during the process there had been mistakes made, but they had got there and advised that as a governing body there needed to be caution when writing and agreeing the articles of association.</p> <p>At this point in the meeting Paul Thompson took over and governors introduced themselves. Mr P Thompson advised governors that he had worked in school improvement for 20 years for 2 LA's and was also a Chair of Governors. Mr P Thompson highlighted the importance of the 3 core functions of the governing body:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction • Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff • Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent <p>Mr P Thompson advised that as governing body there are many different factors that needed to be considered and the following was</p>	

highlighted:

- The school doesn't want to lose its individuality.
- There is no proven evidence that academies perform better than maintained schools.
- Academies were originally for schools falling behind.
- MATs are different to stand alone academies and are backed by the Government to take out the LA layer with significant funding being offered to schools to follow the process.
- Funding, as an academy would be received straight from the Department of Education resulting in no more funding for school improvement within the LA.

A questions and answers document was circulated for governor's information.

- For a MAT to be sustainable there needs to be at least 1,200 pupils on record.
- Senior finance officers are required to be put in place due to the size of the MAT and workload.
- The Strategic Board is made up of Members and Trustees and cannot be employed by the MAT.
- The Local Governing Board doesn't have the same powers as they do within a maintained school.
- All terms of reference need to be precise and accurate from the start as there is only one chance of putting these in place.
- The MAT is responsible for everything including support staff pensions, but not teacher's pensions.
- For all the school grounds, a structural survey needs to be completed before the transfer of grounds to the MAT.
- Schools are given £25,000 each to put towards the fees to complete the conversion. However, the legal fees alone cost around £35,000, which has to be covered by the academy/MAT.
- Governors acknowledged that the Federation's terms of reference and articles would need reviewing to see how to transfer to a MAT as smoothly as possible.

Mr P Thompson advised governors that are many areas that need to be considered when looking at converting, these include:

- Staff are employed by the MAT resulting in the possibility of staff being transferred between the schools to areas where they are required. This would be set out in the articles and governors needed to be cautious when proceeding.
- The role of the Governing Board. Within the MAT the core responsibilities can lay with the members and trustees resulting in the Governing Board only implementing policies not agreeing them. This would also be set out in the MAT's articles of association.
- Admissions, the alternative provision placements for children would remain the LA's responsibility.
- If the LA reaches the tipping point of too many academies and not enough maintained schools, the LA would not have the funding to provide the support they do now.
- As a MAT there is more authority to negotiate subscription

rates, software and many other resources, which isn't always the case within a federation.

- Once converted, all information that Ofsted hold for the joining schools will be wiped clean and the MAT would be given 18 months before an inspection.
- Most factors and day to day running will depend on the individual MAT.
- In almost every MAT there is 1 high school with multiple primaries.

Q. Realistically do we have a choice about academisation?

A. There is a political agenda that schools will become academies. However; this will not happen straight away, but if the LA does reach their tipping point then it may have to happen. More money is being taken away from the LA and as result the support from the LA is diminishing. The factor that needs to be considered is:

- Is the LA going to struggle to support schools in the future?
- If a school becomes an academy/MAT is it in control of its destiny?

Q. Could we do it on our own and the federation become an academy?

A. No; in the current climate the Department of Education is highly unlikely to approve a single academy.

The Head teacher raised that as a result of Wooldale being a coasting school this had put the federation in a position that would mean it couldn't become a single academy or form an 'empty MAT' i.e. forming a MAT, which other schools could join.

Governors acknowledged that at the present time there were no MATs that included free schools and as a governing body they shouldn't feel pressured to make a decision without understanding the facts and the process.

The Head teacher advised that the primary Heads in the valley worked closely together and the general consensus was they would all be happy to become a primary MAT. However, this would leave the high school isolated, which could have consequences further down the line with the transition period.

Q. Are there enough pupils within the primaries to sustain a MAT?

A. Yes there is with the inclusion of the federation.

Q. Does the high school know how the primaries are feeling?

A. Yes, they do.

The Head teacher advised governors that the primary heads had been meeting outside of the strategic meetings with the high school to discuss their concerns, as the high school seemed to be 'driving' the MAT agenda. As a group of primaries, the schools want to stick together. The high school had been advised that the primaries were keen to explore other options as well as a MAT. Therefore, the primary heads would be attending a meeting at Hepworth Primary

School on Friday, where the Head of Thornhill Community School would be talking about his experience of being part of the Focus MAT.

Q. Do you think the high school is driving the MAT to ensure they are not left out?

A. The high school is driving the MAT, as it is more financially viable for them to do so.

Governors agreed that they didn't have all their confidence in the LA for the future due to diminishing budgets. The Head teacher informed governors that since Christmas there had been a few incidents that were pushing the federation away from the LA due to the poor handling of situations. This had left the Head teacher, who had previously been very against academisation, now feeling it needed to be investigated further.

Q. How do we proceed to change Wooldale from a coasting school?

A. Within a MAT a broad variety of schools are required to allow for the good schools to support the schools requiring assistance. The support element and expertise is contained within the MAT, including school improvement, which had previously come from the LA. Also within a MAT there are schools, who should have the capacity to aid schools requiring improvement.

Mr S Rodgers asked governors to consider whether the federation should join an existing MAT or form their own.

Q. Is there a difference in the cost of conversion in a MAT when converting at the same time instead of individually?

A. It has a different process financially and forming your own MAT means that the schools have their own terms of reference and articles of association.

Q. Who appoints the trustees?

A. The governors appoint the trustees and members.

Q. Is it the trustees that employ the CEO?

A. Yes.

Q. There has been some horror stories about teachers' pay and conditions within a MAT. Are all teachers' salaries TUPEE across when converting? Will this need to be within the articles?

A. No all MATs will TUPEE teachers' pay.

Q. Can teachers' pay be changed at a later date?

A. To do so the articles would need to be changed and this has to be completed publically, potentially producing a lot of work.

Mr P Thompson advised that once the decision has been made to convert then the governors need to be meticulous on the quality of the workmanship that is brought in to support the school as well as ensuring that the articles are fitting to the schools. He also advised governors that the services that the MAT buy into really matter, especially services such as HR.

The Head teacher advised that the primaries hadn't explored ethos or vision as a group and notified governors that as a group of primaries moving forward consideration needs to be given on how each school manages performance management, curriculum, SEN and behaviour, as the federation has its own approach.

Governors acknowledged that the strategic direction for moving forward needed to be kept focused on outcomes for pupils and keep what makes the federation individual.

Q. How does devolved revenue work such as Pupil Premium work within a MAT?

A. Pupil Premium can be very varied and as devolvement it must be stated within the terms of reference.

Q. What is the benefit to a MAT having more schools?

A. They have more power.

Mr P Thompson informed governors that there are a number of MATs that have failed, which needs to be taken into account when looking at converting.

The Head teacher raised her concern regarding the workload that would accompany the conversion. This was backed up with Mr P Thompson stating that there can be a substantial workload for the Head teacher and senior leadership team of the school converting. Miss D Whiteley recommended that if this was the case then governors would explore the possibility of paying for someone to come into school to complete the work on the Head teachers behalf.

Q. As a federation, how does the academisation process work?

A. This would be dependent on the Regional Commissioner giving permission and would need to be discussed.

Governors questioned whether there is a more formal arrangement/strategic way to be a partnership without forming a MAT. Governors discussed the topic and agreed that if the schools work closer together this will uncover more of the unanswered questions that the primaries, as a whole, have about partnership working.

The Head teacher asked Mr P Thompson - Whether the primaries could federate instead of becoming a MAT? In Rochdale, there are some collaborative schools working together. The group of primaries can be more effective working in a collaborative partnership without becoming a MAT.

Q. What kind of commitment do we need to make at the next exploration MAT meeting?

A. It is the last meeting of the series so moving forward we are expecting the question to be – Does the Governing Body want to further explore converting to an MAT? The Head teacher advised that the answer should be yes, but to consider other options too.

The Head teacher advised that the Head at Netherthong had asked if they can know the outcome of the meeting tonight. Governors agreed.

Q. Would it be possible to have a governing body meeting with other governing bodies from the primaries?

	<p>A. It could be a worthwhile discussion.</p> <p>Mrs L Caunce asked what would happen to the High School if they were not part of the MAT, as this was a concern for her being a parent of a pupil at HHS. Governors acknowledged that parents will take this into consideration and as a governing body this needed to be considered when exploring moving forward.</p> <p>Governors recognised that in the future there was uncertainty as to whether the LA will be able to support the school and how the school needs to move forward acknowledging the uncertainty.</p> <p>Miss D Whiteley stated that the federation was still in exploration mode with the view of looking at a variety of options but not definitive that the federation would become part of a MAT.</p> <p>Q. Is there a half-way house with the option of buying into some LA services?</p> <p>A. The school whether it is a MAT or a federation will still be able to buy into the LA services that are on offer, but they are likely to cost more than for a maintained school.</p> <p>Q. Is the CEO appointed by the Trustees/Members?</p> <p>A. Yes.</p> <p>Miss D Whiteley summarised the meeting up with the following points being made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The federation isn't saying no to the possibility of conversion to a MAT, but it's not definitive. More information is required to allow governors to understand the process and the possibilities on offer. • In the meantime the schools would work more in collaboration with each other. <p>The Head teacher asked governors to consider what their answer would be if the primary Heads decided to move forward as a primary MAT at the next meeting. Governors agreed that their position would still be the same, but if it becomes apparent that it's not for the federation then that decision would need to be made.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That MAT updates would be an agenda item for the foreseeable future.</p>	<p>Governors Clerking Service</p>
<p>445.</p>	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>There were no items raised under any other business.</p>	
<p>446.</p>	<p><u>Dates of Next / Future Meetings and Possible Agenda Items</u></p> <p>RESOLVED: That the meeting of the Governing Body be held at Wooldale Junior School at 7:00 pm on:</p> <p>Thursday, 23rd March 2017</p> <p>Agenda items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SLT Report 	

440.	Agenda, Minutes and Related Papers – School Copy RESOLVED: That no minute be excluded from the copy to be made available at the School, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.	
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The meeting finished at 9:05 pm.