

CBAT BOARD MEETING

Minutes of the Trustees' meeting held on 13th May 2019 at 6:00pm at Cam Woodfield Junior School

Present: Nigel Riglar (Chair), Graham Ayre, Debbie Bird, Helen Cerullo, Ben Eagle (by phone), Emma Gray (Finance Director), Nathan Wolstenholme, Stuart Wilson (Chief Executive Officer).

In Attendance: David Dale (Clerk).

For the hour before the start of the meeting, the Chair and four other Trustees had a tour of the school site and an informal discussion with the Headteacher and the Co-Chairs and other members of the Local Governing Body.

- 1. Welcome and introductions:** There were no additional attendees.
- 2. Apologies received and accepted:** John Gilbert.
- 3. Declarations of Interest:** The CEO declared an interest in relation to item 17 on the agenda and said that he would withdraw from the meeting if Trustees wished to debate the matter.

4. Minutes of the meeting of 27th March 2019

It was proposed by HC, seconded by NW, that these be approved and signed, to be published on the Trust's website. This was agreed unanimously.

5. Action point checklist

All actions ongoing or completed. The CEO reported that for action CBAT 110 (training for Trustees) he is discussing needs and opportunities with other CEOs, and for action CBAT 112 (probationary period for teachers) he is looking at similar policies elsewhere before discussing a proposed policy with Headteachers.

6. Matters arising

None.

7. Growth opportunities

The CEO updated Trustees on the various growth opportunities for the Trust that were currently being explored. He reported that, in respect of possible opportunities to sponsor Church of England Schools, CBAT Members had recently appointed an additional Member (bringing the total to seven) and if approved, now meet the Diocesan requirement to sponsor Voluntary Controlled schools.

The CEO circulated copies of the county council's specification for a new primary school ('free school presumption') in Stonehouse, to be built as part of the major new housing development on land west of the town. CBAT is interested in sponsoring this new school and has prepared a draft bid which will be further developed with support from the New Schools Network before the application deadline of 24th May.

Trustees asked a number of questions including:

- Will the new school open elsewhere initially? Yes, the school will be opened in temporary accommodation in September 2020, moving into permanent accommodation for September 2021, and open in a phased manner as the new housing is completed and occupied.
- Are any of the new homes occupied yet? Yes, some of the early completions are now occupied and we understand that there is a lot of interest in the houses both locally and from further afield.
- How many bidders are there likely to be for the new school? Difficult to say for sure, but we would perhaps expect to be competing against 2 or 3 other bidders.
- Would there be any particular challenges expected with the new school? Challenges might include the 1.5 forms of entry proposed initially, and as the school grows it might require mixed year group classes.

The CEO then circulated copies of papers on secondary school need in Gloucester, showing current secondary schools and forecasts of pupil number up to 2025/26 based on potential housing development numbers. He explained the context of Gloucester Schools with respect to type of school and current Ofsted judgements. He noted that at present the New Schools Network is not convinced that the basic need case is solid enough to be successful with the DfE due to uncertainty around which of the proposed housing developments will ultimately get planning permission and be built. The CEO recommended that CBAT should remain cautious too.

Trustees asked a number of questions including:

- If the Trust were to investigate future opportunities in Gloucester, are there potential partners? Yes, possibly from higher and further education institutions
- Is there housing growth at Quedgley too? Yes, and an extra primary school (Clearwater) has already been added there.
- Could we look to the cyber security sector for possible partners and links? Yes, we have contacted the GFirst Local Enterprise Partnership to help identify opportunities.

In terms of other opportunities elsewhere, the CEO is having informal discussions with various primary Headteachers in Stroud, and will also remain alert to any future opportunities in Cheltenham. The CEO and Chair are also monitoring developments in Filton.

The Chair summarised the discussion of growth opportunities by saying that the situation is promising overall; Trustees support the application to sponsor the new primary school at Stonehouse, and support the exploration of potential opportunities in Stroud, Cheltenham and South Gloucestershire; but remain cautious about bidding for opportunities in Gloucester and would need to seek further advice on this in due course.

8. Schools updates

The CEO presented Headteachers' reports from the three academy schools. He explained that these were the interim reports, with full reports due next term.

Trustees raised the following issues and questions:

- Berkeley Primary School – the main interest was around the recent Ofsted inspection (see item 9 below) and changes in the Local Governing Body (item 16).

- Cam Woodfield Junior School – Trustees reflected on their site visit and informal discussions with the Headteacher and Governors, commenting favourably on the ‘feel’ of the school and the displays of pupils’ work, and noted the relatively high levels of deprivation and special educational needs locally. The Headteacher and Governors are very keen to renovate the pupils’ toilets, there is some local funding that may be available to help fund this but without a successful capital bid it may be necessary to seek a less comprehensive solution. Trustees asked about the challenge of sharing the site with another school (Infants) that is not part of the Trust, the CEO indicated that in the long term it would be beneficial if the school chose to join the Trust.
- Marling School – Trustees asked about staff recruitment and the implications of an unsuccessful bid to renovate East Campus, both of which are linked to the anticipated growth in 6th Form numbers. Teaching staff have been successfully recruited. The school’s unused capital funds will be used to prepare a number of additional classrooms. Further bids will be made next year for other elements of capital funding.

9. Berkeley Primary School Ofsted inspection

The CEO reported that on Thursday 25th April, BPS received notification of a Section 8 Ofsted inspection happening the next day. This was a one day inspection of a previously ‘good’ school (as inspected in October 2013) and it was carried out by one of Her Majesty’s Inspectors (HMI).

The Headteacher led the school really well through the inspection. The Primary HT Lead was on hand throughout the day and during the inspection the HMI met with the CEO and the acting chair of governors and another governor.

The CEO reported that the inspection had been very positive experience. The HMI said that she agreed with the school’s and the Trust’s own self-evaluation and felt that our improvement plan addressed most of the key areas. She recognised that the children are safe, happy and enjoy the school and she felt that there was excellent capacity to continue to improve the school. The HMI’s report was published today and states that the school is still ‘good’ (no change), highlighting a number of strengths but also areas where improvement is needed (as identified by the Headteacher and SLT) – early years provision, raising achievement in reading and maths, and improving communication with parents. As a result, the next inspection will be a full (section 5) inspection.

Trustees were pleased with the result of the inspection, and asked whether there would be a formal action plan to deliver the improvements required, it was confirmed that this would be presented to the LGB and monitored through the SIP process.

The Ofsted report will be circulated to Trustees once it is received. **Action: CEO to send.**

10. School Resource Management Advisers update

The FD updated Trustees on the recruitment, accreditation and deployment of SRMAs. She reported that she had now completed three deployments herself. There are three further candidates seeking accreditation.

11. Health, safety and wellbeing

Nothing to report.

12. Finance

(i) The FD circulated a report on revenue forecasts and actual expenditure to the end of April 2019. Overall actual expenditure is at 68% of the full year forecast, in line with the budget

profile. Expenditure at Cam Woodfield and Marling is in line with profiles. The Berkeley accounts show an overspend which is being closely monitored. This is due to higher than forecast expenditure on supply costs to cover staff absences and the school is also waiting for UifSM income, the FD reported that if necessary some non-essential spending will not be done this year in order to balance the budget. Trustees noted the current financial position as reported and the actions being taken to monitor and manage it, and agreed that no further action is required at present.

(ii) Budget forecast return outturn (2018-2019) has been submitted in May and the Budget Forecast Return (2019-2020) will be submitted in July. These are statutory DfE returns.

(iii) The FD presented a report on possible changes to the pay structure for the Trust's support staff. The position is complex because the county council has implemented a new grade structure for its staff, and while the Trust's support staff at the two primary schools are graded on the county's old structure those at Marling are not. The FD has done a detailed piece of work with one of the Trustees looking at options for standardising the pay structure for all support staff, bringing grades into line with the new county structure, and how to implement the changes. Trustees asked questions about how to retain flexibility within the pay structure, the cost impact of the proposed change (minimal), and the need to remain competitive with other schools and Trusts.

The FD recommended consulting staff and trade unions on the proposed new structure, including adopting the GCC Band Structure grades 1-10, but adding four intermediate grades (2a, 4a 5a and 6a) to provide flexibility in the short term.

It was proposed by GA and seconded by DB that the Trust should consult with support staff, trade unions, Headteachers and LGBs, and bring the matter back to the Board for decision at its next meeting in order to implement the new pay structure from 1st September 2019. This was **agreed** unanimously. **Action: FD** to begin the consultation process in early June.

(iv) The FD reported that there had recently been an audit of the Trust's internal assurance processes, which had found 'substantial assurance' and made recommendations in respect of committed expenditure, and skills audit (see item 13 below). The FD said that she would circulate the auditor's report to Trustees once it had been finalised. **Action: FD** to send.

13. Trustees' skills/competencies audit

Following on from the audit recommendation (item 12.iv above), the Clerk drew Trustees' attention to the DfE Competency Framework for Governance describing six features of effective governance, underpinned by 16 competencies. Based on this, the National Governors' Association has produced a skills audit template for use by MAT Boards. It was agreed that this template should be emailed to all Trustees to complete before the next meeting, for the Clerk to consider and identify any possible future training needs. **Action: Clerk** to circulate. **Action: Trustees** to complete and return.

14. Premises

The CEO reported that CIF bids had been unsuccessful. He is working to determine the best strategy for next year. In particular, it was noted that there are concerns about the condition of some windows at Berkeley Primary School and that further piecemeal repairs might not be practicable, so this would remain a priority for bidding for capital funds.

15. Feedback from LGBs on new scheme of delegation and change to governance

The CEO reported that he had held meetings with Governors from the two primary schools to discuss the proposed new scheme of delegation. Written comments have been received from Cam Woodfield Junior School LGB. Berkeley Primary School LGB meets on 15th May.

CWJS LGB had raised a number of issues about changing the names of the LGB and of Governors, and how this would be perceived in the community. They had suggested the terms School Development Board and School Development Partner respectively. Trustees discussed the merits of these and other suggested names, in particular the tension between retaining 'Governor' as a familiar term and the new reality of accountability for the schools.

It was agreed that the CEO would collate feedback following the BPS LGB meeting on 15th May and circulate to Trustees for further consideration before a final decision is made by the Board.

Action: CEO to circulate collated feedback on the proposals.

16. LGBs – Minutes of last meetings and updates

Trustees received and noted the draft minutes of the Marling LGB meeting on 13th March 2019.

17. LGB recommendations for consideration in line with scheme of delegation

The CEO declared an interest in this matter and offered to withdraw from the meeting if appropriate. The Chair said that it would not be necessary to withdraw if the discussion were to be purely about the process for making a decision, but if Trustees wished to debate the substance of the proposal then he would ask the CEO to withdraw.

The Chair referred to the paper that he had presented to Marling LGB concerning the proposal from the Pay and Conditions Committee for flexibility in the pay scale for the joint role of Marling Headteacher and Trust CEO. He said that the LGB had accepted this proposal and were now putting it forward as a recommendation to the Board. The Chair said that he would re-write the paper so that it would stand as a formal recommendation, and circulate it to Trustees for decision by email. If any Trustees felt that the proposal needs further debate it would be held over until the next meeting of the Board. **Action:** Chair to circulate proposal for decision.

18. Trust policies

The CEO presented the final version of the Performance Appraisal Policy for Teachers, referring to a number of minor amendments made to reflect comments received from staff and trade unions. The Trust's HR advisers EPM have endorsed the policy. It was proposed by HC and seconded by GA that this Performance Appraisal Policy for Teachers be approved for implementation in all three academy schools from 1st September 2019. This was **agreed** unanimously.

It was noted that the seven draft policies brought to Trustees at the last meeting are still out to consultation with staff and trade unions until 17th May. Following any amendments to reflect comments received, final versions of these policies will come to the next Board meeting for approval.

19. Trustees' decisions under scheme of delegation taken since last meeting

None to report.

20. Any other business

(i) The Chair drew Trustees' attention to the letter of resignation from the former Chair of BPS LGB. An acknowledgement and thanks had been sent by the CEO at the time. An interim Chair

has been appointed. Trustees asked:

- Have the other Governors at BPS seen the letter? Not all of them yet, but the LGB meets this week and it will be shared then.
- Do other Governors have similar concerns? Two other Governors have resigned this term.

Trustees discussed the comments in the letter of resignation, and the need to recruit new Governors to help with school improvement and accountability going forward. One Trustee felt that it was unfortunate that the former Chair had felt it necessary to resign, and that the perceived lack of inclusivity amongst Trustees – many of whom have connections with Marling School – had been a factor in his decision. Another Trustee took a different view, but felt that the Trust was not sufficiently proactive in communicating the breadth of skills and experience amongst Trustees and Members.

The Chair summarised the discussion by saying that there is a clear transition plan to reduce the overlap between Trustees and Marling Governors; that Trustees are not appointed as representatives of any individual school in the Trust; and that, as the letter of resignation had been acknowledged in writing, he did not consider it necessary to enter into any further correspondence or discussion with the former Chair.

(ii) The CEO drew Trustees' attention to the letter from Lord Agnew at the DfE concerning lessons learnt from the academy audit process, the quality of governance, and the expectations on Trustees.

21. Risk register

The FD drew Trustees' attention to risk 4.2 (litigation), highlighting that the Trust had complied with a court order to provide information in relation to a personal injury claim. Trustees asked:

- Who is the claim against, and for how much? The county council, value not known.
- Are there any costs to the Trust? Any direct legal costs to the Trust are likely to be small, but we will try to reclaim them as appropriate.

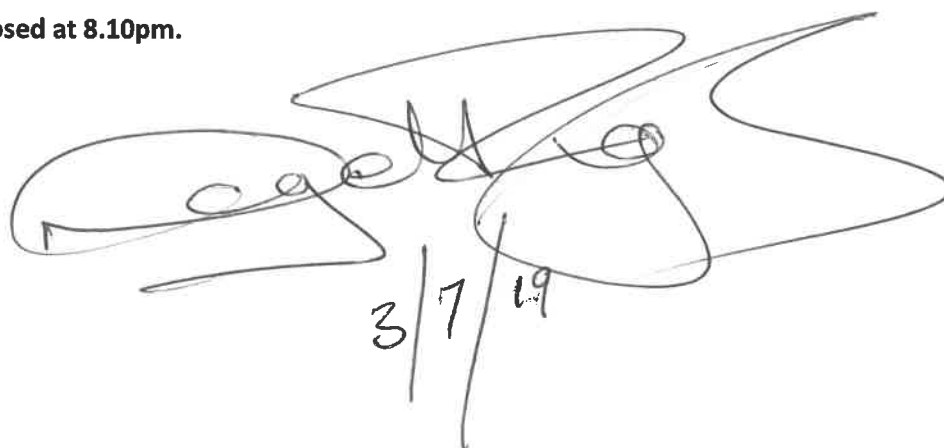
22. Dates of future meetings

The date of the next meeting (the final scheduled meeting of the current academic year) is:

- Wednesday 3rd July 2019.

Proposed venue Berkeley Primary School. **Action: Clerk** to confirm with BPS.

The meeting closed at 8.10pm.



A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, followed by the date '3/7/19' written vertically below it.