

COTHAM SCHOOL

Meeting of the Academy Governing Body

Thursday 19 September 2024

MINUTES OF MEETING

Governors Present:		
Dora Alderson, MG	Peter Huckle, MG	Jared Rufus, CG
Jo Butler, Headteacher/Accounting Officer	Lucy Hunt, MG	Ian Spencer, CG
Sandra Fryer, CG Chair of Governors	Graham Nutbrown, CG	Isabel Tobias, MG
Sophie Hamilton, PG	Richard Puttick, PG	Henna Nathwani, CG
	Rebecca Reid, PG	Jakub Wilczewski, CG
In Attendance (non-voting) Chris Reed, Deputy Head Domini Leong, Deputy Head Aimi Potter, Director of Post 16 Allison Crossland, Director of Finance & Resources Jenny Sainsbury <i>attended from 5-5.15pm</i> Gosia Dreissig Governance Professional	Apologies Jenny Champion-Smith Jack Barber Ruth Thomas Absent:	Governors in Post: 17/20 Quorum = 5 (1/3 rounded up) MG = Member Appointed Governor CG = Co-opted Governor PG = Parent Governor

Item	Minutes of Meeting
1	<p>Welcome, Introductions and Apologies. Items for AOB, Declarations of interest - annual compliance completion (hard copy document) & meeting (verbal)</p> <p>Chair welcomed everyone. No declarations of interest. No other business. Apologies received from JC-S, JB and RT.</p> <p>IT commented on a single register visit report. DoFR confirmed that it had been received in the holiday period and she would add it to Governorhub for governors to see and acknowledge.</p> <p>Chair asked attendees to complete and sign a hard copy of the 2024/25 Declaration of Interests and return it to the Governance Professional for further processing.</p> <p>Headteacher introduced the new Assistant Headteacher, Jenny Sainsbury who joined the SLT from 1 September 2024.</p>
2	<p>Annual appointment of Chair, Vice Chair and Committee Chairs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chair - GD took the chair for this item. SF elected unopposed. ● Vice Chair - RR and PH proposed as Co-Vice Chairs. Agreed ● Committee Chairs - PH elected as LWB Chair. IT elected as P&T Chair. RR elected as FFPF Chair. RP elected as Audit and Scrutiny Chair
3	<p>Safeguarding training</p> <p>OM provided the school Safeguarding training.</p> <p><i>Apart from DoFR and Headteacher the rest of the SLT left the training as they have already completed it.</i></p> <p>OM urged Governors to use safeguarding email address if they have any concerns to report</p> <p>Q - What to do if you have a safeguarding concern about another staff member? What to do if you have a concern about the headteacher? If staff have safeguarding concerns about another</p>

	<p>staff member they should take their concern to the headteacher. If the concerns are about the headteacher, then it should be taken to the Chair of Governors.</p> <p>Action: Governors to read and mark as signed all compulsory safeguarding training on GovernorHub by 11 October 2024.</p>
4	<p>Minutes of Last Meeting - 2 July 2024 - Agreed as correct.</p>
5	<p>Matters Arising and Actions - see Actions report. All completed.</p> <p>Chair thanked Headteacher for sharing the Bristol Educational Partnership (BEP) report.</p> <p>Discussion around funding.</p>
6	<p>Headteacher report</p> <p>Headteacher talked through the key points. Headteacher noted a very positive start of the school year. The school leaders were pleased with the exam results. Headteacher commented on the site looking amazing, especially with the updated Dance Studio setting. Headteacher praised Year 11 students on how focused they are.</p> <p>Headteacher commented on today's Meet the Tutor event for Year 7 parents and students.</p> <p>Discussion around Year 7 intake numbers. CR confirmed that the school had a healthy number of students wanting to come to Cotham. In regards to the Post-16 intake numbers, AP pointed out that the numbers are the same as last year. The Foundation provision is full and the students are settling nicely. AP commented on a very lovely feedback from teachers.</p> <p>Q - Is an individual number meaningful on the report? Discussion around Pupil Premium.</p>
7	<p>Management Accounts Approval</p> <p>Management accounts for May, June and July 2024 Approved</p> <p>DoFR pointed out the external Auditors will be in the first week of October 2024 to complete the year end processes for 2023 - 2024.</p>
8	<p>Chairs update</p> <p>Governor support. Chair shared a school offer for a chromebook and some IT training for governors if required. Four governors requested a chromebook (RR, SH, IT & PH).</p> <p>Governors asked for support with Governor Hub Mobile access. The Governance Professional will share with governors the guide. WiFi access to enable governors to log during the onsite meeting was sorted by the IT team.</p> <p>Governance and compliance. Approved electronically via Governor Hub - to be checked with the Auditors for the next year.</p> <p>Governor Vacancies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 governor vacancy; co-opted vacancy, second accountant; potential recruitment via agency. - 2 parent vacancies; parent governor vacancies to be advertised after half term. - PH and IT's terms are ending but they will stand for another term. <p>Annual reviews, skills check. Action: Chair to carry out the reviews by Christmas. DoFR asked the Chair to complete the audit skills review for new governors as soon as possible in readiness for the audit.</p> <p>Strategy update. Chair comentend on last year's event. To be picked up by a Governor Hub communication. RR and DA to support.</p> <p>The Annual Governor's Conference. Chair asked for some suggestions. A date to be confirmed. JC-S and RT to cover the Open Event on Wednesday.</p>

9	<p>Academies Handbook Annual update - Action report was shared</p> <p>DoFR shared the background of this Handbook. The Academies Trust Handbook has three levels of expectations, there are 'musts', which academies have to comply with, 'shoulds', which are best practice, and general signposting.</p> <p>Main changes refer to the paper that advised Governors on their responsibilities and that the minimum requirement is for governors to be aware of the updates from 1 September and as a minimum read and refamiliarise themselves with the musts requirements.</p> <p>Q - Do we have contingency planning in the event of a cyber attack? Yes there are several controls in place to deflect and minimise risk. DoFR confirmed that the school is looking at reaccreditation with Cyber Plus as well. Discussion around a recent multi academy trust in the South West cyber attack and their experience. DoFR pointed out that there is now an update on digital security in the schedule of musts which would be useful for the Governing Body to be aware of and should form part of the governing body annual self evaluation exercise.</p> <p>Governors confirmed receiving advice and approved the compliance.</p>
10	<p>Residential trip - Shallowford Farm</p> <p>School Trip Approval for Shallowford Farm from 7-11 October 2024. DoFR talked through the trip to provide the governing body with sufficient information to provide reassurance that the proposed residential trip meets the policy and procedural requirements.</p> <p>Purpose of the trip: To offer Refugee and Asylum Seekers students an opportunity to expand their experiences outside of Bristol city and develop an understanding of British culture. Improve Social emotional learning through the range of activities provided by farms as well as develop self-esteem, self-efficacy and resilience. The trip has been fully funded by donations and grants. Recent Crowd Fund & grant towards transport.</p> <p>Q - Will the trip put our staff in a dangerous position due to the recent asylum seekers events in the country? No, the farm is located in a remote, rural area.</p> <p>Q - Could governors have a cost per student for this trip? DoFR replied that the basic cost is £100 per student and £900 for transport. DoFR pointed out that the trip is fully funded.</p> <p>Governors approved the trip.</p>
11	<p>Cotham Playing Fields Stoke Lodge update</p> <p>The history behind the Cotham Stoke Lodge Fields was revisited.</p> <p>Court confirmed for 25 January 2024 for 5 days and an additional day in February.</p> <p>Discussion around the legal process to date and next steps, legal fees and governors being approached by the public in relation to Cotham Playing Fields at Stoke Lodge. Governors agreed that the procedure to follow should such enquiries be received would be to refer the enquirer back to the school. Governors in attendance confirmed that they were fully apprised of the ongoing legal matter including costs.</p> <p>Q - Has the school contacted any other schools re: the same issue? No.</p> <p>Chair recommended to provide some updated communication on Stoke Lodge Playing Fields as they are a part of Cotham School. Currently, the school has an agreement to use land at Golden Hill.</p>
12	<p>Committee Chairs Updates and minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Learning & Wellbeing ● Finance, Premises & General Purposes Management Accounts Approval ● Personnel & Training <p>RP agreed to stand up as the Chair of the Audit and Scrutiny Sub- Committee. RP to work with DoFR on the Audit. RP to feedback on the Audit arrangements in December.</p>

13	<p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ESFA Letter for Accounting Officer and Governors Attention <p>DoFR pointed out the main changes regarding the current functions of the ESFA will transfer into the Department for Education from April 2025.</p> <p>Q - How would DfE announce school inspections linked to ‘notice to improve’ situations? DoFR replied saying that they would write to the school.</p>
	<p>Actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Governors to read and mark as signed all compulsory safeguarding training on GovernorHub by 11 October 2024. 2. Chair to carry out the reviews by Christmas. DoFR asked the Chair to complete the audit skills review for new governors as soon as possible in readiness for the audit.

Meeting closed at 20:00

Next Meeting – Thursday 12 December 2024