



Park Grove Primary School

FULL GOVERNING BODY MEETING **Minutes of the Meeting held on** **Tuesday 19th July 2016 at 7pm**

Present: Mr David Hare (Chair) Miss Jo Sawyer (Headteacher)
Ms Sheila Davitt Dr Tillmann Jacobi
Mrs Vicky Hearson Mrs Kelly McDonald
Mrs Catriona Martin

In Attendance: Mr Iain Tessier (Governor Support Officer and Clerk)
Mr Adrian Fletcher (peripatetic School Business Manager)
Mrs Helen Steele (Teacher)
Mr Richard Ludlow (EBOR Trust)
Mr Tim (EBOR Trust)

1. Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from Heather Barden and Richard Romaniak.
- 1.2 There were no declarations of interest.

2. Membership Matters and Governor Development

- 2.1 The Chair reminded all governors that a new Vice Chair was still required. No nominations had come forward thus far so could governors give the position some thought over the summer.
- 2.2 The Chair noted that, whilst the Governing Body was always keen to recruit highly skilled individuals, there was no need to rush to fill current vacancies particularly given that if Academy status was approved there would likely be changes to the local governance arrangements.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting – 26th April 2016

Previously distributed.

3.1 **Resolved:**

The minutes of meeting held on 26th April 2016 were agreed to be a true and accurate record of the meeting. The Chair was duly authorised to sign the minutes.

4. Action Plan and Matters Arising (not on the agenda)

- 4.1 Item 1 – matters pertaining to Academisation were on the agenda.
Items 2 and 3 – The Chair indicated that matters were in hand with regards committee structure, membership and terms of reference and as part of that he would be circulating a proposal to revise meeting dates etc. It was worth exploring new ways of working that could be more efficient and require less formal meetings to take place.

5. Headteacher's Report

- 5.1 The Headteacher had circulated their report prior to the meeting. The data capture appendices had been looked at in detail via committee and the Headteacher did not want to highlight anything else in particular. The report covered the current teaching profile and contained a brief budget update. Questions and comments were invited. None were lodged.

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- 6. Decision on Whether to Proceed to Consult on Becoming an Academy and to Consult on Joining the EBOR Academy Trust (the MAT)**
- 6.1 The Chair began by noting that the questions lodged to the principal parties of EBOR had been circulated to governors for their ready reference. The Chair handed over to Mr Ludlow and his colleague to address any supplementary questions or comments from governors.
- 6.1.1 A governor wanted to hear more detail on how local governing bodies would get their voices heard at MAT board level. Mr Ludlow said that EBOR Trust had begun working with the NGA on developing governance across the MAT. Individual chairs were being canvassed about how best to pass information and views back and forth, up and down the chain. The MAT board wanted to encourage (and if necessary train) governors to find their voice and provide effective challenge at local level. Governors could only challenge/support their leaders if they really understand the new environment in which schools were operating. From time to time local chairs would be invited to the higher level strategy meetings, although the Trust wanted to avoid having too many people around the table at every meeting. EBOR wanted every school and every governor to understand that they were a 'shareholder' in the Trust.
- 6.1.2 A governor asked what support mechanisms were in place to support that found itself in difficulties for whatever reason. Mr Ludlow said that, from a governance perspective, EBOR was using scrutiny bodies, whereby it called upon governor expertise at both MAT board and local board level to support schools in challenging circumstances. These governors would provide the mechanisms and pass on the knowledge to ensure that proper scrutiny and challenge could resume at local level – ultimately responsibility had to remain at local level. Alongside this, EBOR was developing a peer review system with a practitioner led approach. In other words, schools (or the MAT) would identify local needs in order to boost provision and the MAT would build in time for identified specialists to go in and support schools with their provision in certain areas or even their leadership capacity. This would apply to all schools not just those in challenge – better to act early to prevent issues reaching a critical stage.
- 6.1.3 A governor said that Park Grove benefitted from the support and validation of a challenge partner. How would EBOR fill that role? Mr Ludlow said that the YCPs had been very good in their way but actually schools needed something deeper than a once or twice yearly health check. Schools needed a school improvement function that helped embed good practice and take ideas from developmental phase to fruition. There needed to be value for money also. Mr Ludlow gave a practical example of how the MAT was supporting one of its new schools. A quick response was vital and a MAT was largely in a better position to act swiftly than an LA with limited resources. The Headteacher noted that schools were already seeing LA services being stretched and dwindling, for example, the LA no longer offered many of its data analysis services.
- 6.1.4 The Chair noted that one of the initial questions lodged to the MAT was around audit processes to ensure that everyone could be assured that EBOR was conducting its business in an open, transparent and above all ethical manner. There had recently been some high profile cases of malpractice within MATs. What was EBOR's view/approach? Mr Ludlow said that he was of course aware of these incidences nationally but there were no such concerns within EBOR – the personnel at board level were governed by rigorous checks and balances and newer MATs had learnt a lot from seeing how things had evolved, sometimes badly, elsewhere. Schools were welcome to perform due diligence exercises on EBOR, in fact that was to be expected. Schools would see that systems were transparent and robust. Were there mechanisms to prevent conflicts of interest? Mr Ludlow said that the Trust's auditors were wholly independent and very thorough in their checks for any irregularities (of which there were none). Mr Ludlow welcomed strong processes in this area.
- 6.1.5 A governor asked about top-slice funding for the MAT and how big strategic decisions would be taken. Mr Ludlow said that the EFA mandated for a 5% top slice and EBOR adhered to that guidance. The MAT was committed to getting value for money and not directing monies away from the core business of education provision, although some monies had to be allocated to business functions such as finance and HR etc. The MAT board would always welcome governors' input and views on strategic direction and large scale projects but ultimately the decisions on such matters rested with the MAT board and governors needed to be comfortable with this. A discussion followed.
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- 6.1.6 A governor asked about performance management, staff development and building capacity to support schools across the MAT. Mr Ludlow said that the MAT would outline what support requests had been received and then local headteachers would indicate if they had a specialist with the capacity to support that work. Individual schools would be remunerated for that work and these monies could be used to bring in suitable back fill. There would be no pressure on any school to give support. As the MAT expanded then the pool of expertise would broaden. The MAT would always look to build leaders and promote internally and in that sense the MAT would provide a welcome umbrella for career progression for staff and this in turn would help the group to attract the best teachers. Headteachers would present opportunities to their staff in terms of development opportunities, be it school to school support accreditation or leadership courses, and hopefully aspirant teachers would want to take up those challenges. EBOR also wanted to conduct surveys with staff to try and tease out the level of ambition in individuals and provide pathways. Mr Ludlow said that certain performance management functions would be centralised, particularly the performance reviews of headteachers. The MAT board would also take a role in SLT recruitment in individual schools, although it would always be wise to consult local governing boards and take on board their views.
- 6.1.7 Governors turned their attention to capital funding. Was there a bidding process for funds within the Trust? Mr Ludlow said that the Trust was exploring ways in which individual schools could effectively 'borrow' from the central pot in order to bring about a desired alteration to their schools fabric perhaps earlier than might have been possible, on the condition that these funds were returned over time. EBOR was trying to simplify and hasten the way in which capital projects were brought on stream.
- 6.1.8 A governor asked Mr Ludlow for his thoughts on the future of the MAT. Were there expansion plans? What was the timescale for any expansion? How would this process be managed? Mr Ludlow said that the MAT did need to expand to realise the economies of scale and capacity that were needed. A larger MAT could create more opportunities for investment and staff development. Ultimately it was all about achieving best value from services and in that regard there was some consensus nationally that a MAT needed 3000+ pupils. This might mean that the MAT was quite geographically spread out, indeed EBOR already had schools on the east coast and down towards Selby. The MAT board was already looking at how to develop regional 'hubs', with their own leadership and governance functions that fed into the main board. Mr Ludlow thought that having 8-10 York schools join the MAT would lead to an optimum size but the picture was changing nationally all the time.
- 6.1.9 The Headteacher asked what would happen if the school stayed as it was. Mr Ludlow said that governors needed to decide whether they wanted to be a 'driver' – helping to contribute to the earlier phases of development of the MAT – or a 'passenger' – one that joined later on when the shape, structure and development of the MAT was largely complete. There was a real opportunity for Park Grove to join a forward thinking and progressive Trust.
- 6.1.10 A governor asked Mr Ludlow to summarise the values and ethos of EBOR. Mr Ludlow said that it was all about creating an extended family of schools that cared for and took responsibility for themselves and for each other. It was about promoting excellence in education and supporting those children that were most vulnerable. It was about doing things for the greater good.

Tillmann Jacobi left the meeting

- 6.2 The Chair thanked Mr Ludlow for his time. Addressing governors the Chair said that they needed to agree whether to proceed to consultation and agree the consultation documents. Mr clarified points of accuracy that were needed in the letter to parents and stakeholders. Certain amendments were proposed to the consultation documents and these were agreed in principle.

Richard Ludlow and Tim left the meeting

- 6.3 **Resolved:**
Governors agreed unanimously to proceed to consultation on becoming an Academy and to consult on joining the EBOR Academy Trust. It was anticipated that the consultation period would run from
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the 12th September 2016 to the 21st October inclusive. Governors agreed to meet again on the 8th November at 6pm to take a final decision on whether to proceed with the proposals.

7. KOOSH Annual Report

- 7.1 The SBM was invited to speak to this item. The SBM said that as part of the agreement with KOOSH, KOOSH were required to lodge a formal report for governor consideration. The feedback from users was that KOOSH was doing a good job and the provision was certainly popular. From the school's perspective, the relationship with KOOSH was very amicable and mutually beneficial. Governors welcomed the report and the feedback.
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8. Committee Reports

8.1 Raising Achievement

The minutes of the meeting had been circulated to all governors. The committee chair said that it had been a very positive meeting and there had been a full review of the end of year data. Areas for concern had been considered and SLT had responded to governors' challenge by going through the priorities in terms of improving outcomes in Maths, Writing and for disadvantaged pupils. The gap between outcomes for boys and girls had narrowed, in some cases disappeared altogether. Governors had recognised that 2016 had been a challenging year for teachers given the constant upheavals and lack of guidance with regards curriculum, monitoring and assessment. The school was doing a great job providing a wealth of data and of course the schools efforts had been validated through a successful OFSTED inspection.

9. Annual Review of Governance

- 9.1 The Chair noted that OFSTED had validated the governors' own view of their performance and contribution to the school. The Chair wanted all governors to complete a fresh skills audit as the governing body had developed quite a lot over the past year and there had been some recent departures. The outcomes would be looked at in the Autumn. **Action ALL.** Training requirements would be identified thereafter.
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10. Any Other Business

- 11.1 The Chair noted that the Pay, Appraisal and Staffing committee would require a new member come the Autumn. Governors were asked to consider their suitability to join the committee. The same applied to the Strategy Committee.
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12. Date and Time of Next Meeting

- 12.1 The next meeting was scheduled for 4th October 2016 at 6pm.
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The meeting ended at 9pm.

Signed: (Chair)

Date:

Park Grove Primary School

Actions from the Governing Body meeting on 19th July 2016:

ACTION	Item no on minutes	WHO	WHEN
1) Complete skills audit	9.1	All governors	By next FGB