



THE GOVERNING BODY OF ST. JOHN FISHER CATHOLIC VOLUNTARY ACADEMY

Minutes of a meeting of the Academy Council held at 6.00 pm on Monday 30 March 2015.

PRESENT

Rev. Dr. J D Cortis (Chair), Mrs B Blackham, Mr P Booth, Mrs S Collins, Mr N Dalzell, Mr K Higgins (Head Teacher), Mr A Oldroyd, Mr A Quinn.

In Attendance

Angela Hutchinson (Minute Clerk)

1 WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER

The Chair welcomed Governors and opened the meeting with a prayer.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, CONSENT AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from and Mrs F Wilson (consent), Mrs H Zaman (consent) and Ms C Anchor (consent). There were no declarations of interest.

3 NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS TO BE BROUGHT UP UNDER ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2 items were notified.

4 MEMBERSHIP OF ACADEMY COUNCIL: UPDATE

The Chair reported that Mr T Hinchcliffe had resigned his non-voting position on the Academy Council with immediate effect from 8 January 2015. The Chair had written to him to thank him for his services to the Governing Body and the School Community.

14/85 RESOLVED: To note the resignation of Mr T Hinchcliffe

5 MINUTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON THE 12 JANUARY 2015

14/86 RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on the 12 January 2015 be approved and signed by the Chair as a true record subject to the numbering of the resolutions to change to 14 for academic year 2014-15.

6 MATTERS ARISING

(a) Arrangements for Recording Assets: (min 14/53 refers)

It was noted that the Trust had received valuations for each of the 3 academies with a total value of around £18m, with £14m being the value of St John Fisher's assets. This would enable the Trustees to depreciate the assets over 50 years. Work would now continue within school on a detailed inventory.

14/87 RESOLVED: to receive an update at the next meeting or the Finance, Pay and Personnel Committee.

(b) Policies approved at the last meeting-(min 14/59 refers)

It was confirmed that policies approved at the last meeting had been placed on the academy's web-site.

(c) Admissions Policies –(min 14/60 refers)

Following consultation on the two admission policies, the Diocese had suggested 2 minor changes. These were detailed and agreed. No further amendments were suggested by Governors.

14/88 RESOLVED: To approve the version of the School's Admission Policies for 2016-17 as considered at the 12 January 2015 meeting but subject to including one minor modification to the supplementary information sheet and one to the policy itself and to place both policies on the Academy's web-site.

(d) Minutes of Admissions Panel meeting held on 6 January 2015 (min 14/70 refers)

The Head Teacher advised that there were currently 10 appeals pending for admission to Year 7 in September 2015. There were 38 last year. A day to hear appeals was planned for 24 April 2015.

14/89 RESOLVED: To receive the minutes from the meeting of the Admissions Panel held on 6 January 2015 and to receive outcome of the appeals at the next Academy Council meeting.

(e) School Holidays 2015-16–(min 14/74 refers).

These had been circulated to parents via the news-letter.

(f) Appeals Panel-(min 14/76 refers)

A meeting had taken place and the original decision had been upheld.

7 MINUTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON THE 27 FEBRUARY 2015

14/90 RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on the 27 February 2015 be approved and signed by the Chair as a true record.

8 MATTERS ARISING FROM THESE MINUTES

There were no matters arising.

9 SEN AND DISABILITY POLICY

Copies of the revised SEN Policy had been circulated with agendas and contained a considerable number of changes, marked in red. It was noted that Education, Health and Care Plans would gradually replace Statements. The need for a glossary of abbreviations was discussed and agreed. The need for an annual SENCo report to Governors was noted and this would be received at a meeting of the Mission Committee planned for 9 May 2015.

14/91 RESOLVED: To approve the revised Special Educational Needs Policy, subject to minor amendments agreed, and place a copy on the Academy's web-site.

10 HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT FOR TERM 2

It was noted that the Head Teacher's Report had been received by the Trust Board at their recent meeting. Governors confirmed that they had read the content. Questions and comments were raised on the following entries from the report:

(a) Recruitment to the main school and Sixth Form

It was noted that Year 7 would be full in September 2015 with a waiting list. A decline in the number of baptised Catholics this year was noted but a higher number of Catholics in future is expected.

The number of external students joining the Sixth Form was discussed but could not be clarified at this stage.

(b) Attainment 8 and Progress 8

The Head Teacher's detailed report on Attainment 8 and Progress 8 as measures of value added were noted.

(c) Changes to Sixth Form curriculum and funding

A reduction of 17.5% in funding for over 18 year-olds was noted. It was confirmed that students over 18 would still complete their programmes of study.

The 'devaluing' of AS levels was discussed, together with the re-introduction of exams at the end of 2-years study for A-levels. A timeline for reform of A levels was appended to the report and was discussed. The Head Teacher commented that the staggered introduction of reforms made the Sixth Form curriculum very complex.

(d) Trialling of assessment without levels in two faculties from September 2015

It was confirmed that the newly developed system of assessment without levels would be trialled in the Maths and Sports faculties from September 2015 with a view to introducing the system in all subject from September 2016. Staff training had been undertaken.

(e) School transport

The impact of proposed cuts to school transport was discussed. Feedback was given following the Head Teacher's recent representation to Kirklees Cabinet. Parental involvement had been encouraged as much as possible. A final decision was awaited.

(f) Options for 2015-16

The Head Teacher drew Governors' attention to an update on options chosen by Year 9 students from September 2015. Various aspects were noted, including the

decline in those opting for French or Spanish and an increase in those taking Triple Science.

(g) Year 11 Progress

Detailed figures on progress by Year 11 students was noted. Validated RAISEonline data would be available in the near future. They would be used for in-service training on 11 June 2015. It was noted that this would be the last set of data for St John Fisher Catholic High School.

The Head Teacher confirmed that staff and students were working very hard to improve grades. A Governor commented on the commitment made by staff to come into school over the Easter break and help students with extra tuition.

(h) Staff Training

It was noted that staff had completed on-line training for radicalisation awareness.

14/92 RESOLVED: to receive the Head Teacher's report for term 2 with thanks.

11 MINUTES FROM ACADEMY COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD SINCE LAST COUNCIL MEETING.

(a) Standards in Learning and Teaching, 25 February 2015

Discussions were held with the head of English Faculty following a recent review.

Q Has any progress been made in terms of staffing?

A Some progress has been made. This matter is an agenda item.

Exam results and RAISE data for 2013-14 were analysed

A RAGed School Development Plan was carefully considered and meeting was satisfied with the progress made so far.

Science Targets for 2015-16 were discussed.

14/93 RESOLVED: to receive the minutes from the meeting of the Standards in Learning and Teaching Committee.

(b) Finance, Pay and Personnel Committee, 27 January 2015

It was noted that a recent telephone fraud issue had now been resolved.

All staffing issues, including appointments, resignations and welfare had been discussed and noted.

Mrs Blackham gave an update on work to improve the reporting from PS Financials software. It was noted that an invoice for 5 months salaries had been received from the LA and would be in the next budget statement.

Governors were pleased to note that 2 of the 3 Trust Academies had been successful in bids for funding from the DfE. Monies would be made available to re-roof the sports hall and to replace windows plus associated works.

14/94 RESOLVED: to receive the minutes from the meeting of the Finance, Pay and Personnel Committee and the budget monitoring report.

14/95 RESOLVED: to hold a budget monitoring meeting on Thursday 23 April 2015 at 3.00 pm and full meeting on Tuesday 2 June 2015 at 6pm

12 TRUST BOARD MINUTES

(a) Trust Board meeting, 9 January 2015.

The 3 Academies had undertaken Self-Evaluation and the results were discussed and noted.

Trust Board members had conducted an audit of their own skills and agreed that there was no need for targeted Trust Board wide development.

An Accounting Officer had been appointed, to work for the Trust on 3 days per week and for St. John Fisher on 2 days per week.

A Financial Management and Governance Self-Assessment form had been completed and submitted to the EFA by the deadline set.

(b) Trust Board meeting, 25 March, 2015

The Chair gave a verbal report and included the following highlights:

- Trust Board approved the adoption of the CES Policies and Procedures covering: capability, discipline, grievance, sickness/absence. These can be accessed through the School's web site
- Approved the Trust's Finance Policy subject to feedback from the auditors. This policy also covers such issues as tendering, fraud, travel, whistle blowing and fixed asset
- Working towards clarifying the Trust's role in appointments of senior staff, changes to leadership team etc.
- Approved a Complaints Policy subject to inserting a level for Trust involvement as Local Authorities have no jurisdiction over academies
- Agreed a framework for Head Teacher's reports

14/96 RESOLVED: to receive the minutes from the Trust Board meeting of 25th. March at the next meeting.

(c) Standards in Learning and Teaching Committee, 4 March 2015

Areas discussed included:

- Assessment without levels
- Trust wide development plan
- Areas of success and risk from the School Development Plans for 2014-15

(d) Finance, Pay and Personnel Committee, 18 March 2015

Minutes of the meeting were tabled and feedback was given by Paul Booth, Chair of the Committee.

Mrs V Craven from Baker Tilley, Auditors, had attended the meeting and discussed their services and given an overview of the auditing requirements.

Academy conversion costs of £25,000 per Academy had proved insufficient with a deficit of £11,000. Diocese fees had been higher than expected.

Continuing work to improve reporting from PS Financial Soft-ware was outlined.

There had been discussion on financial policies. Contributions to the Trust budget from each Academy were discussed. The current 1% per academy would be re-examined.

The appointment of Mr N Aurangzeb as Chief Financial Officer was welcomed.

Budget monitoring of all 3 Academies was considered.

(e) Mission Committee, 4 March 2015

Matters discussed included:

- Committee's Terms of Reference and Action Plan
- Plans for the mass to launch the Blessed Peter Snow Academy Trust on 30 April 2015. Further details were given.

14/97 RESOLVED: to receive the minutes from the Trust Board and three Committees meetings held this term

13 URGENT STAFFING ISSUES

(i) Second in English

The recruitment process for a Second in English had failed with no appointment made. It was suggested that there was a need to look more widely than the Faculty. A chart showing the current leadership team was tabled. The SLT had suggested an appointment at senior level to oversee both English and Modern Foreign Languages. The possible appointment of a Director of Communications for this role was discussed in detail. It was agreed that additional excellent teaching was required in the 2 areas to drive up standards. Costs would need to be discussed and staff would need to be consulted.

14/98 RESOLVED: That the Head Teacher consults about the possible appointment of a Director of Communications and not re-advertise the Second in English post.

ii) Assistant SENCo

Following recent interviews, no suitable candidate was found. This was an important post and succession planning needed to be considered. The post would be re-advertised

(iii) Teacher of Maths

5 applications had been received and 2 applicants would be interviewed on the 31st March 2015. Mr Oldroyd agreed to be on the interview panel.

(iv) Details of other on-going/up-coming vacancies, including the Second in Science, were given and noted. The use of agency staff was outlined.

(v) Governors were pleased to note the appointment of Mr P Rushton as Assistant Head Teacher for Post 16 Education. He would take up his post on 1 September 2015.

(vi) Pastoral Care

Governors were reminded that pastoral care had been reviewed 2 years ago but now needed a further review following the appointment of the Senior Director of Studies to the Assistant Head Teacher for Post 16 Education vacancy. A chart detailing the current pastoral structure was tabled.

The issues facing the pastoral team were not diminishing but they had to teach, say, 24 out of 30 lesson slots per week, leaving insufficient time for wellbeing issues.

The current structure was discussed and possible changes to roles and responsibilities were put forward. Budget implications were questioned and discussed in broad terms. It was confirmed that staff would need to be consulted about possible changes to the TLR structure.

14/99 RESOLVED: to consult regarding proposed changes to the pastoral care structure and for the Finance, Pay and Personnel Committee to consider the issue further.

vii) Delivering and leading PHSCE

The PHSCE lead would leave on 31 August 2015. She works 4 days a week. Recruitment for her replacement needed to take account of changes to the PHSCE curriculum from September 2015 and the revised options menu for key stage 4. The role also used to include responsibility for students' work experience. This task was now restricted to post-16 students.

Possible changes to managing the RE/PHSCE faculty and delivering the PHSCE curriculum were outlined and discussed. The subject should not be marginalised but could be led by 1 leader of RE and PHSCE.

The Head Teacher confirmed that the changes would be via an internal appointment and the changed structure would require careful monitoring over the next couple of years to measure the impact on teaching and learning of the 2 subjects. Financial implications were noted.

14/100 RESOLVED: That consultation with staff regarding possible changes to the TLR structure for Pastoral Care and PHSCE/RE be actioned and then considered by the Finance, Pay and Personnel committee.

viii) Teacher of French

It was noted that a replacement teacher of French was required. This would be advertised with Spanish as a desirable qualification.

At this point the remaining agenda items were discussed, prior to discussions on matters requiring the exclusion of Staff Governors.

A Governor gave feedback from a Careers Academy Local Advisory Board meeting.

A Quality Assurance meeting had also been attended by a Governor.

The LA Enterprise Education team had come into school to complete an audit. A summary of the visit would be submitted to the Standards in Learning and Teaching committee.

14/101 RESOLVED: to note verbal reports from Governors' visits.

15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Staff Absence Insurance Quote

A paper was tabled by the School Business Manager giving details of quotes from 6 insurance providers. This had been prepared by the Academy's accountants.

4 of the 6 had been eliminated due to lack of cover, too many exclusions or high costs. The 2 remaining were the current provider and 1 other at lower cost. Detailed scrutiny confirmed that maternity cover was not included in the lower quote. When all was considered, Calderdale Council offered the best value for money and were already providing a good service.

14/102 RESOLVED: That the contract for Staff Absence Insurance be renewed with Calderdale Council for a further year from 1 April 2015.

(b) Sixth Form Trip to New York

It was proposed that a trip to New York be organised for Sixth Form students in April 2016. An outline itinerary was given and the cost was anticipated at around £1,000 per student. This was discussed and the benefits to students were outlined.

14/103 RESOLVED: That the proposed Sixth Form trip to New York be approved.

16 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

14/104 RESOLVED: That the next meeting of the Academy Council be held at 6.00 pm on Wednesday, 1 July 2015

Staff members left the meeting at this point and discussions on Urgent Staffing Matters continued. The Chair confirmed that these matters would normally be discussed at Committee level but required attention before the end of the term.

URGENT STAFFING MATTERS (CONTINUED)

(a) Head of Humanities Faculty

This post had been discussed by the Finance, Pay and Personnel Committee following an indication from Mr Dalzell that he wished to retire at the end of the academic year. An advert needed to be placed as soon as possible. This was agreed.

(b) Requests for part-time hours in the Maths and Humanities faculty

A request for part-time hours from a maths teacher has already been considered twice but a decision was deferred until the staffing profile and timetable requirements for September 2015 were clearer. Another member of the maths faculty had now requested flexible working hours.

2 candidates were to be interviewed in the near future for a Maths teacher vacancy. If a good appointment could be made, this would cover the requested part-time working. The benefits of having 2 part-time maths teachers plus a new full-timer were discussed.

14/105 RESOLVED: That both requests for part-time hours by members of the Maths faculty be approved from September 2015.

(c) Leader of Learning: History

The Leader of Learning History had requested part-time hours on her return from maternity leave. It was confirmed that she also agreed to relinquish her TLR position. The Head Teacher outlined how history and geography could be managed in this new scenario. This request linked to the issue of advertising for a Head of Humanities faculty. This was discussed and the potential problems were outlined by the Head Teacher.

14/106 RESOLVED: That the request from the Leader of Learning, history, to work part-time be approved and also accepted her relinquishment of the TLR position.

It was noted that Dr P O'Donnell who was teaching chemistry at post-16 level had agreed to continue for 1 more year.

17 AGENDA, MINUTES AND RELATED PAPERS – SCHOOL COPY

14/107 RESOLVED: That no part of the agenda, minutes or related papers be excluded from the copy to be made available at the Academy, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.