



Black Firs Primary School

Longdown Road, Congleton, Cheshire CW12 4QJ

Tel: 01260 272935

Fax: 01260 277285

Web site: <http://www.black-firs.co.uk>

email: mcasserley@black-firs.co.uk

office@black-firs.co.uk

pta@black-firs.co.uk

(MINUTES APPROVED BY GOVERNORS VIA EMAIL ON 14.6.17) CURRICULUM & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING (PART 1)

At 4.30pm on Thursday, 25th May 2017

Present: David Wood (DWO), Martin Casserley (MC), Daphne Wright (DWR), Toby Hassall (TH), Damien Calnon (DC), Rachel Cam (RC), Paul Horrocks (PH), Roland Domleo (RD), Alex Thompson (Clerk)

Apologies: David Whitewright, Andrew Brown

CmaT: David Hermitt (DH), Andy Pear (AP), Jane Millward (JM)

Item	Notes	Actions
1.	<p>Welcome & Apologies</p> <p>DWO chaired the meeting in the absence of David Whitewright. Apologies were noted and accepted.</p>	
2.	<p>School Council Update</p> <p>Mr Woods introduced 4 pupils from the Y6 School Council. The children talked about their role, interaction with other pupils and events they have attended this year. This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presenting assembly each week on a Wednesday • Supporting Growth Mindset & resilience across the school • Visit to the Houses of Parliament. The visit included watching a debate in the House of Commons and a meeting with Fiona Bruce MP • Junior Town Council meeting, at which Adam became the Junior Mayor • Fundraising for Diabetes charity, Red Nose Day & Comic Relief <p>KiVa Anti-Bulling Programme</p> <p>Mr Woods gave governors an overview of the KiVa Programme. He explained that it raises awareness of the impact of bullying and teaches the children how to support the victim and the impact this can have rather than being a bystander or onlooker. Mr Woods shared that the sessions with KS1 pupils are informal, whereas in KS2 the sessions follow a set programme. Mrs Wright shared that currently the sessions are focusing on e-safety and cyberbullying. Governors asked about the number of bullying incidents this academic year. Mr Woods responded that only one case had been dealt with by the KiVa team and that the children have responded well to the programme. The KS2 children will complete the annual KiVa survey next month; the results from which will be known late September.</p> <p>Mr Woods and Governors thanked the children for their update on the School Council and the work they do to represent the views of the children in school.</p>	<p>All: For information</p>



3.

CmaT Update

David Hermitt (DH) introduced the CmaT Directors, Andy Pear (AP) and Jane Millward (JM). AP provided governors with an overview of his background which included being a governor at CHS for 15 years before resigning to become a CmaT Director. AP commented that he had specifically asked to provide the feedback to BFS regarding their request for a MAT to MAT transfer as he has had no previous contact with the LGB. AP informed BFS Governors that regretfully CmaT were declining the request. The following reasons were given:

1. **They believe that the risks and costs are understated**
2. **They believe there are issues with the proposal for governance and that this will not be approved by the RSC**

AP further commented that Cmat would not be discharging their responsibility by allowing the MAT to MAT transfer at this moment in time.

A lengthy discussion ensued where BFS Governors challenged the CmaT decision with the following questions and comments:

BFS Question: The most recent Cmat audited accounts show a £422k deficit. Surely this therefore presents a huge risk to BFS? AP responded that he 'didn't believe this was the position'. DH commented that the cash position has not dropped below £400k. Governors questioned how much of the £400k is specifically from CHS and how much is actually from BFS and Castle. They stated that both BFS and Castle Primary School have healthy surpluses however they have serious concerns about CHS's finances. AP agreed that a separate meeting should be held to discuss Cmat finances. He will attend along with the Finance Director.

BFS Question: What is the perceived risk around governance? As a governing body, we have concerns re the governance in Cmat, particularly who sits on which Board and how they were chosen. Please elaborate on your concerns regarding the governance structure of The Quinta MAT. DH commented that the concern is the CEO will remain as the Headteacher at The Quinta Primary School. MC responded that the Headteacher at The Quinta, Tracey Walklate, has spoken to the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) and they do not have an issue with her being both the CEO and Headteacher at The Quinta.

BFS Question: BFS clearly has evidence that needs to be considered and we would therefore like to contest your decision. How do we initiate that process? AP responded that they want to avoid an ongoing dispute and can't allow that to happen as he genuinely feels it would be irresponsible. PH stated that he is 'genuinely concerned that the Board believes that the LGB doesn't like being part of CmaT and will be removed'. He asked if this is still the situation. DH responded that the interim Executive Board had been mentioned in his letter due to the failure in governance however, now assurance has been given that BFS LGB aren't against CmaT then the Governance and Search Committee will now review this.

BFS Question: There has been failure on both sides, BFS and CmaT, and lots of lessons for both of us to learn. The response from DH was that the Governance and Search Committee has the responsibility of resolving that issue.

BFS Question: As an organisation you should not be scared of challenge nor state that it is your intention to get rid of the LGB when this happens. DH commented that it is their intention to try and find a harmonious way of moving forward. AP stated that it is not their intention to disband the LGB and that this would be a last resort.

BFS Question: We are concerned that a lot of time seems to be spent discussing things back and forth with no outcome. Fundamentally the decision of the LGB is that it is for the benefit of the children in the school, plus the ethos and vision is to work more widely with primaries in the town. We are not anti CHS or CmaT however, ethos is key and has to drive our decision. Irrespective of the transfer decision made by the Directors our view is different. Based on that how do we move forward? How can we work this out as in the long run BFS has a different view? AP asked DH if he would like to respond to the question. DH informed the Governors that CmaT is a legal entity and there are legal structures as part of the Scheme of Delegation. Ofsted has recently inspected BFS and graded it as good. The Board did not see a compelling case for the benefit for the children and therefore this is not a stable and safe decision. However, if TEAM MAT is formed we will reconsider the decision. Governors were concerned at this comment as at the LGB meeting CmaT stated they would prefer to support the transfer to The Quinta MAT, as it is already formed, rather than TEAM MAT. Governors expressed concerns that CmaT now seems to be moving the goalposts again.

BFS Question: As a local governing body it would be irresponsible to support staying with CmaT in a structure where we don't have representation, it isn't our ethos nor are we listened to. DH stated that the lack of representation is not a permanent one; it is one that the Governance and Search Committee will now look at. AP commented that he is the chair of this committee.

BFS Question: How can we move forward with this and appeal against the decision? DH confirmed that should the LGB wish to appeal once they receive the letter confirming the Board's decision this should be put in writing to the CmaT Board and Members. He also commented that they had taken legal advice prior to making their decision.

Both RD and PH requested that CmaT not only detail their concerns in the letter but also provide evidence to back up their concerns and evidence of how the decision was made. The LGB has also received advice and BFS Governors are extremely concerned that an interpretation of the evidence has been made rather than the decision made on fact, particularly when comments are made such as 'we believe it the MAT to MAT transfer is going to cost more than you have stated' and 'we believe that governance is an issue'. DH commented that BFS had underestimated that cost of the MAT to MAT transfer as JM had informed him that it will cost in region of £50k. Governors did not accept this. MC stated that the figure is totally inaccurate and they can provide evidence from Browne Jacobson Solicitors which clearly states that it will cost £6k.

AP mentioned that financial concerns had not been mentioned in the business plan, nor had any risks been identified. He said that he found it difficult to see what benefits were different to that being offered by CmaT. MC responded that he had responded to the question regarding potential risks at the Directors' Meeting and that the concerns regarding finance has been ongoing and has been raised at all LGB meetings as well as separately with the CEO and Finance Director. MC stressed that BFS would like the transfer to be an amicable process but that CmaT are now making this extremely difficult; an alternative option being to share the concerns more widely. DC raised the issue of ramifications following the decision and that the LGB will decide the appropriate steps it wishes to take following receipt of the letter from CmaT.

TH voiced his concerns again regarding the £422k deficit that CHS has, as stated in their most

	<p>recent audited accounts. DH responded that the deficit includes all outstanding bills that CHS would have to pay should they cease to operate. The response from MC was that the governors with financial expertise on the LGB disagree and would like the opportunity to raise their concerns. Both parties agreed that it is essential that a separate meeting is arranged to discuss the finances as soon as possible.</p> <p>A local governor asked how The Quinta Primary School will be receiving the decision. The CEO responded that he is happy for BFS to inform the Headteacher in the first instance, which will be followed up formally from CmaT, however it is an internal matter first and foremost.</p> <p>Summary of actions agreed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CmaT CEO to write to BFS with their reasons for declining the MAT to MAT transfer. This will be received after half term. 2. The letter from CmaT will include details of how they reached their decision to decline the MAT to MAT transfer and provide evidence to support each decision/reason. The letter will also include details of how BFS can appeal against the decision. 3. The Governance and Search Committee will make a decision on 7th June regarding the future of the LGB. AP reiterated that disbanding the LGB would be a last 'resort'. 4. A clear decision was made to hold a separate meeting with Andy Pear (CmaT Director) and the CmaT Finance Director to discuss BFS Governors historical and ongoing concerns with regards to finances and other issues with CmaT. The meeting should be arranged ASAP. BFS Clerk to liaise with CmaT Clerk to agree a date. 5. MC to inform Tracey Walklate, Headteacher at The Quinta Primary School, of the response from the Board. This will be followed up formally by CmaT. <p>RD requested that the following be minuted, 'I have been on the LGB for over 40 years and this is the best governing body I have seen. It would be a travesty for you to disband this'. AP responded that 'with good will and good faith it will be resolved'.</p> <p><i>(RD, DH, AP & JM left the meeting at 5.30pm)</i></p>	<p>CmaT: Letter to BFS confirming decision including evidence to support decision</p> <p>AT: Liaise with LM re meeting</p> <p>MC: Inform TW re CmaT decision</p>
4.	<p>Pecuniary Interest None declared.</p>	
5.	<p>Minutes of Previous Meeting & Any Matters Arising Minutes of previous meeting agreed and accepted as an accurate record.</p> <p>Matters Arising: Staffing was discussed. MC & DWr had discussed some possible changes to year groups but received negative feedback from staff. FW has secured a position at Gawsworth Primary School therefore some changes will need to take place and this will be discussed with staff. Discussed CF moving to teach in Reception with a commitment to stay with the school for the next 12 months. Previously she had expressed a wish to move out of the area for personal/family reasons.</p> <p>KP now seeking to apply for the 'assessment only' route which is a 12-week course and she would gain qualified teacher status by Christmas.</p> <p>Numbers are low for September despite all pre-school children moving up to Reception. Long</p>	<p>All: For information</p>

	<p>term this will not be an issue with the new housing developments locally however this will after the budget in September 2018.</p> <p>Challenge: How do you intend on setting a balanced budget in 2018? MC responded that he would use some of the school's income and/or reserves if necessary.</p> <p>Challenge: With regards to the vacancy, when will this be advertised? MC explained that there are two options; formal application process or a one year temporary contract. The latter may be the preferred option due to the time of year and the fact that most teachers will have already secured positions due to the notice period required. Governors agreed to support a one-year temporary contract and offered their support with the interview process if required.</p>	
6&7.	<p>Assessment Update</p> <p>MC shared a spreadsheet detailing pupil attainment from September to March. He is currently working with the developers to adapt the system to enable attainment targets to be set by a percentage figure, or something similar, which will support parents in identifying where their child is at each half term. Using percentages 100% will indicate that the child has achieved expected and more than 100% will indicate the child has achieved more than expected.</p> <p>Challenge: How are you going to share what the confidence band is and communicate the various measures to parents? MC responded that information will be shared at parents' evenings, via ParentMail and on the website.</p> <p>Challenge: The choice of representation is key so that parents understand the information being shared. Is it possible to use pictorial? MC agreed and commented that he is happy to look at a variety of different formats for evidencing attainment. Currently Earwig is updated at least monthly. The aim is that this will be weekly for both progress and attainment.</p> <p>Governors asked about any trend information. MC shared the group information that evidences EAL/SEND/summer births for girls etc. Governors were happy that there is no trend data that needs addressing. MC commented that the information had been shared with the HMI at the recent Ofsted inspection and she commented positively on the data and the assessment system.</p>	All: For information
8.	<p>Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff attended Positive Behaviour Training delivered by Penny Millington from LD CAMHS. MC added that it is in the school's philosophy to support positive behaviour but it is not the answer for all types of behaviour. TH currently undertaking an NPQSL for middle leadership. DWr continues to co-lead on literacy moderation training and has cascaded training to colleagues across the Congleton primary schools. 	All: For information
9.	<p>School Direct Student Update (provided by TH)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two School Direct Staffordshire University students on placement; one in Y1/Y2 and the other in Y3/Y4. Both have demonstrated good teaching with outstanding features. TH commented that it has been a successful year for BFS with the School Direct students. To date, 5 out of the 8 students have secured a permanent teaching role for September and 2 have interviews after half term. 	All: For information

<p>10.</p>	<p>Staff & Student Absence Student absence is currently 96.64%. Target is 97%. Governors requested a separate column for illness to enable them to identify which children were absent due to sickness. MC to action.</p> <p>Staff (paid) absence is 0.9%. Governors asked whether there are any concerns regarding the staff absence rate. MC responded he has no current concerns.</p>	<p>MC: Create additional column</p> <p>All: For information</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>Educational Visits The following visits have taken place: Y1 – Chester Zoo Y2 - Tattenhall Y3 – Liverpool Museum</p> <p>Reception are due to visit Quinta Wood and Y5 will be attending their 3rd kayaking session tomorrow at Astbury Mere.</p>	<p>All: For information</p>
<p>12.</p>	<p>Any Other Business In his role as the science link governor, DWo has met with FW to discuss science across the school. A copy of his visit report has been forwarded to the clerk and will be circulated with the minutes.</p> <p>School is closed to the children due to the election on 8th June as the school is being used as a polling station. Staff will be in school. The morning will be spent working on the outdoor classroom & polytunnel and they will take part in an art workshop in the afternoon.</p> <p>Date of next meeting: 19th October 2017 at 4.30pm.</p>	<p>AT: Circulate report with the minutes</p>

Meeting ended at 6.30pm.