



# Black Firs Primary School

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## STRATEGY MEETING

at 4.30pm on Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2016

**Present:** Andrew Brown, David Whitewright, Martin Casserley, Daphne Wright, Toby Hassall, Paul Horrocks, Jen Harrison, Mike Warren, Roland Domleo, Alex Thompson (Clerk)

**Apologies:** Dave Lupton

Agenda	Notes	Actions
1. Apologies & Additional AOB Items	AB welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were noted and accepted by Governors.  There were no additional AOB items raised.	
2. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest	Governors were asked to declare any pecuniary interest or conflict of interest in connection with the business to be discussed during the meeting. None were declared.	
3. Previous Minutes & Matters Arising	Minutes were approved as an accurate record and seconded. Matters arising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Mission Statement</u>: 'Maximising potential' has been replaced with 'stimulating a growth mindset' on all documentation and the website. <b>Governor challenge: From the information provided in documents and on the website will parents understand the ethos of the school?</b> MC responded that previously the information had been subjective and now the narrative provides the detail required.</li> <li>• <u>Self-Evaluation Report &amp; School Improvement Priorities</u>: <b>Governor challenge: Does the document include an Executive Summary?</b> MC confirmed that he has revisited the document and provided narrative and clarity in the document where required. He also confirmed that the priorities document will include narrative updates as the work is being completed.</li> <li>• <u>Parent Feedback</u>: 40 feedback surveys were completed at the recent parents' evening. The results from the survey now need to be collated and the comments captured and/or responded to. MC commented that the school needs to capture Y6 parent feedback before they leave. This will take place at either the Summer Parents Evening or on Sports Day (16<sup>th</sup> June). Governors commented that parents evening may be a good time, particularly whilst parents are waiting to be seen.</li> <li>• <u>Planning Permission Update</u>: Still awaiting a response. MC commented that a member of staff from Cheshire East (CE) Assets Team had visited the school</li> </ul>	MC: Continue to collect parent feedback during summer term, particularly Y6



	<p>yesterday and they discussed pupil numbers and space/capacity within school. They were extremely impressed with the school. MC asked them about any opportunities for capital funding and was told that this would be noted and included in the feedback to CE. <b>Governor challenge: What was the outcome of the recent bid for the classroom extension and re-fenestration?</b> MC confirmed that unfortunately on this occasion it was unsuccessful.</p>	
<p><b>4. Review of current 3-5 year plan</b></p>	<p>MC explained that the School Development Plan is a detailed document and therefore he has extracted the priorities from it and created a separate document. The group discussed the priorities which are yet to be completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Astroturf – MC has received a couple of quotes. Additional quotes will be obtained before half term for comparison prior to a decision being made. <b>Governor challenge: Do we now have planning permissions and is there funding in place to cover the cost?</b> MC confirmed that planning permission is in place and although there is a current shortfall in the funding the contractor won't require payment until September, by which time CHS will have repaid the loan to school. <b>Governor challenge: If the project isn't completed this summer will the money be ring-fenced to ensure it is completed next summer?</b> MC confirmed that the project will be a priority for next year if it isn't completed this academic year.</li> <li>• Parking – The 'no stopping' signs have now been erected outside school. Previously parents were able to drop off and pick up children outside school but this is no longer allowed between the hours of 8.30am and 5.00pm. This is enforceable. MC agreed to inform all parents via Parent Mail.</li> </ul> <p>Governors commented that it would be helpful if the SDP could be RAG-rated for the current year and a new document created for the next academic which includes reviewed timescales, excluding any items/projects that have been achieved. MC agreed to action both of these prior to next meeting.</p>	<p>MC: Obtain additional quotes</p> <p>MC: Inform parents re 'no stopping' restrictions</p> <p>MC: RAG-rate SDP &amp; create new priorities document</p>
<p><b>5. The Future for Black Firs</b></p>	<p>The group discussed the school and the current situation. MC shared with governors that the current number on roll is 292. This is an increase from 262 in the past 18 months. This equates to an additional class of pupils for the school.</p> <p><b>Governor challenge: Do we need to include the Black Firs triangle in the SDP?</b> MC responded that only if houses are being purchased in the area then school will go up to PAN (45 pupils per year group). Governors asked if 45 is the maximum per year group. DWh responded that parents can appeal against a decision and therefore take the year group over PAN, however the capacity of the school is 280 so in that scenario we would evidence that we are over net capacity.</p> <p>Governors then discussed the current position of the school, particularly in relation to the past 12 months and the pros and cons of being in Cmat.</p> <p><b>Governor challenge: As a school are we happy that all aims have been met?</b> MC responded that common assessment is ongoing, as is CPD. He also stated that Central Services and HR are now more efficient and that Cmat will be</p>	

	<p>running their own payroll from the end of this month. MC explained that although it has been a lengthy process this has been due to capacity and time issues. Governors commented that perhaps it would be beneficial for Cmat to employ temporary staff to support with any audit in future. MC responded that this would not be required as the system Cmat are now using should now be able to produce all the information required.</p> <p>DWh commented that Y6 transition to CHS is important and needs to be a priority and asked if this was something the governing body can support. MC mentioned that he will be meeting with Jim Barlow from CHS in the first instance so he can provide information on the individual needs of children (where applicable). Staff will also be supporting this process. MC agreed to feedback to governors re transition at the next meeting and identify and potential areas for support.</p> <p>MC shared a recent article that was published in the Congleton Chronicle. The article mentions the Cmat application for sponsorship and a free school for Congleton. He explained that several Heads in the CeCP had contacted him as they were unhappy about the content of the article. MC shared that he had spoken to David Hermitt who responded that the newspaper had misquoted him. MC explained to governors that until a new bypass is built, with additional new housing, a new free school will not be considered. Currently, in Congleton, only Cmat is eligible for sponsorship (once the restructure of governance has been actioned) and to bid for any new free school as they are the only MAT with multiple schools. A single academy with MAT papers would not be eligible. MC informed governors that there is a CeCP meeting next where the article and MATs will be discussed with all Heads and that he would feed back to governors at the next meeting.</p> <p><b>Governor challenge: Focussing on our school, in 2022 what will school look like? Is our school going to look and feel any different (except for the all-weather pitch and new classroom)?</b> MC responded that the £300k bid for the hall &amp; classroom extension and re-fenestration was unsuccessful. The full cost is c.£500k and capital funding is required to support with these projects. For school to raise this sort of money would take in the region of 5 years or more. Governors agreed that these projects need to be included in the 3-5 year plan. They also asked that it be included in the Cmat plans as this is the vision for Black Firs, particularly with the probability of the new houses being built thus further increasing pupil numbers and additional space being required. MC commented that 315 is the absolute maximum for the school in relation to teaching and learning.</p> <p><b>Governor challenge: Are there any other projects that need considering?</b> MC identified that the roof and windows would require replacing in the next 5 years. The back playground also requires re-surfacing either with artificial grass or tarmac in the next 3 years. Governors asked that these also be included in the plan. Other areas such as painting, lighting and heating were discussed, although these will be included in the annual budget under maintenance and repairs.</p>	<p>MC: Feedback on transition at next meeting</p> <p>MC: Feedback at next meeting</p> <p>MC: Include capital project in plan &amp; Cmat future plans</p>
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	<p>MC informed governors that there are a variety of staffing changes from September and as a governing body they need to include succession planning including the probable retirement of the Head and Deputy Head in the next 5 years. Governors agreed that this should be included in the 3-5 year plan.</p> <p><u>Cmat &amp; the White Paper</u></p> <p>MC shared a document he had written which included information regarding the Government's view regarding the future of schools and MATs. He shared information regarding the 2.5% cut in Education Services Grant (ESG) and the impact this will have on academies. At present 2 secondary schools and 5 primary schools have converted to academies. The cut in ESG will mean a loss of c.£246k next year across the 7 academies (not taking into account the LA schools). MC stated that it was definitely the right move to join Cmat, however the school will not get the economies of scale in the future with only 3 schools and therefore the longer term plan is to have one MAT for all Congleton schools. This is also the Government's view as they recommend 15-20 schools in a MAT.</p> <p><b>Governor challenge: How are Black Firs going to take this forward? Is it the intention that a new MAT will be formed or that all schools will join Cmat?</b> MC responded that it will be one MAT where all schools are equal. There needs to be a structure with a level playing field but where we ensure that all schools retain their autonomy, however reap the benefits of working together, economies of scale and much less risk. DWh commented that the next Strategy Committee meeting will need to look at the future and what is best for the school. MC stated that currently there isn't another option (ie. town MAT) as discussions are still in the infancy stage and that both secondary schools need to start working together. A further complication is that the Diocese are currently preventing church schools from joining a MAT that included non-church/faith schools; although this may be changing. MC also clarified that if the option to leave Cmat is better for the school then they will leave. Castle Primary School has also stated the same.</p> <p><i>(AB &amp; PH left the meeting)</i></p> <p>DWh shared that Cllr George Hayes is currently talking to each of the Congleton schools seeking their views regarding a possible option of one Congleton multi-academy trust that involves all schools with equal status.</p> <p>Governors agreed to revisit this at the next Strategy Committee meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> September (unless an extraordinary meeting is called before then), at which time MC should have further information from the other schools in Congleton and also the Diocese.</p>	<p><b>MC:</b> Include succession planning in 3-5 year plan</p> <p><b>All:</b> for information</p>
<p><b>6. AOB</b></p>	<p>None identified.</p>	
<p><b>Date &amp; Time of Next Meeting</b></p>	<p>The next Strategy Meeting is on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2016 at 4.30pm in the Staff Room.</p>	<p><b>All:</b> For information</p>