

HUNSLET CARR EXTRAORDINARY GOVERNING BODY MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 21 June 2024 at 5.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Sarah Gardner (Chair) (via Zoom) Martin Lumb (Headteacher)
Lammie Ameyoua Ian Cunningham
Claire Davidson Jon Hirsine (via Zoom)
Lindsey Kemp Elisa Whitfield
Matt Woodcock (via Zoom) Cllr Paul Wray

IN ATTENDANCE: Jane Charlton, Clerk – Governor Support Service
Joanna Roberts – Assistant Headteacher (via Zoom)
Charlie Sharpe – Assistant Headteacher (via Zoom)
Matthew Farley - Assistant Headteacher (via Zoom)

1.00 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.01 There were no apologies received.

2.00 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.01 Declarations were received from John Hirsine as a trustee of the MAT, and Paul Wray as a Local Authority Councilor.

3.00 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

3.01 **Resolved:**

- that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2024 be approved as a correct and;
- that a copy be signed by the chair.

4.00 REVIEW ACTIONS AND MATTERS ARISING

4.01 There were no matters arising from the minutes.

5.00 READING MATERIALS

5.01 The following reading materials had been circulated to governors prior to the meeting:

- Questions sent to the Headteacher following the previous meeting and answers provided.

6.00 DISCUSSION

6.01 The Chair asked whether governors had received the responses to the reading materials and whether they required any clarification of the information provided. Governors confirmed they had.

6.02 **Q.** The response from the Local Authority offered a meeting to go through the costs, is the school willing to take up this offer. Also, where have the Local Authority figures been obtained from as governors had previously been informed the school did not have them?
A. The figures were taken from a report run this morning and come from Leeds for Learning, which all schools are able to access.

The Chair added that it would be useful to obtain information from Cockburn on the provision not matched in the table.

ACTION

- 6.03 **Q.** The school uses Fusion HR by choice, even though the local authority offer this service but a HR service is included in Cockburn's top slice figure.
A. This would be a cost to the school on top of Cockburn's top slice figure. If the school chose not to use Fusion, a cost could be obtained for the service through the Leeds for Learning site, based on the number of children in the school.

Cllr Wray pointed out that there may be some services included in Cockburn's top slice that the school chooses to take but that quantitative information was required about what the school would receive if it joined the MAT to enable the school to understand the risk factor.

- 6.04 **Q.** The suspended staff cover was included in the local authority top slice but not the MAT's and would be a larger cost to the school.
A. It was not known how this cost would be covered by the MAT.

- 6.05 The Chair asked whether there were any questions from governors who were not present at the last meeting.

- 6.06 **Q.** As the June submission deadline has now passed, is there still a rush to make a decision?
A. There were no time restrictions to the school but the school may lose the opportunity to join the MAT as Cockburn needed to put their proposals to the DfE. In addition, if the school delayed responding to Cockburn, they may decide to look at another school.

Ian Cunningham pointed out that, if 75% of the children at the school moved up to Cockburn, it would provide the school with an opportunity for input into their future.

The Headteacher added that there were programmes, for example maths, the school could work on which would have an influence on the ways of working within the high school, rather than the other way around, as Year 6 teachers would inform Cockburn where Year 7 needed to start from. In response, Cllr Wray pointed out that there was no guarantee of this as the MAT board may not accept this way of working. The Headteacher agreed.

- 6.07 Cllr Wray raised that governors had not been informed what benefit there would be of teachers from the school supporting teachers in other schools in the MAT.

In response, a governor pointed out that when teachers helped in other schools, they became better teachers themselves. Another governor added that, as part of their previous role as a HLTA, they went into other schools to learn and would not have been sent if it would have impacted on the school.

- 6.08 The Headteacher explained that conversations had taken place with SLT members about what the school could do to prevent them from leaving. One thing to come out of these conversations was to be able

to gain experience of being a senior leader and that this would help retain staff for a further four years as having them in school for four days per week for four years was preferable to them leaving the school.

A discussion then took place about staff providing support in other schools, when a governor commented that, ultimately, the school would lose these members of staff and could not prevent this and should not be used as a deciding factor. Another governor added that joining the MAT was not about retaining staff because schools needed natural churn as, when schools stagnated, they did not perform well and staff would naturally leave as they grew and developed and this should not be used as a reason to join the MAT.

The Chair highlighted that people learned off one another and that learning was not a one way street and should be seen as an added benefit, not a driver. It was also something the school had no influence over and that there were no guarantees.

A governor agreed there was no guarantee staff would not leave the school but that the school could minimise the risk as MATs look at talent management and, if keeping staff meant having another role in a different school, then should be viewed as good as thought needed to be given to the children in south Leeds. Being part of a MAT would make it easier for staff to work in another school would provide them with more options as it would be easier to do.

A governor pointed out that the school did not have the capacity or resource to develop creative children, for example in learning a musical instrument, and joining Cockburn would be an opportunity to improve and help strengthen this area within the school. A governor agreed that the national curriculum at this age did not leave room for exploration of the arts therefore the school was tied by the curriculum but Cockburn could help with this, for example through after school clubs.

The Headteacher explained the school relied on schemes as there were no teachers in school with the skills required to deliver the learning and that the gap was in performing arts, rather than sport. A high percentage of children at Cockburn went into drama/the arts and, although children at Hunslet Carr would not get preference, joining the MAT would provide them with better experiences while at the school which would help when they moved to Cockburn.

The Chair added that learning was not a one way process. Cockburn wanted the school to join the MAT as it would add value to them and would provide Hunslet Carr with an opportunity to become more inventive.

- 6.09 **Q.** Would there be an opportunity to leave the MAT once the school had joined ?
A. No, there would not.

Q. Why was this ?

A. As the school was required to sign a contract which was legally binding. However, if standards dropped within the MAT the school would be able to approach another MAT but would not be able to revert to a local authority school.

6.10 **Q.** What would the role of Hunslet Carr governing body be within the MAT?

A. The Scheme of Delegation would set out what the role of the Head of Hunslet Carr and it's governors, the Head of the MAT and the MAT governing board could make decisions on. Hunslet Carr governors would become governors of the Hunslet Carr MAT and would attend the MAT board.

Q. Who are the Members and Trustees?

A. Members and Trustees are a requirement of a charitable trust, whether it is a school or a business. They have a very strategic overview of the school & meet less often than governing boards.

Cllr Wray pointed out that governing bodies of maintained schools had more say on the strategic running of a school than a trust board, therefore the school would have less input to the running of the school. J Harsine added that governors would have less influence but also a lighter workload as trust board's met on a less regular basis although Cockburn may not object to the school holding meetings on a more frequent basis

Q. Would committee meetings still take place ?

A. No. However, only governors were able to talk about the school during Ofsted visits therefore the role of governor was an important one that would not cease to exist.

6.11 As comments from SLT members had previously been lukewarm, the Chair invited comments from SLT members.

- SLT1 had previously explained they didn't like change but knew it was inevitable that things would and felt the school would be in control of the move. The move to the MAT would mean losing the feel of SLT but they felt this could be carried forward and it would be good for children to have more opportunities in sports. They were excited but nervous.
- SLT2 said it was the government's aim for all schools to become MATs and agreed with EW that the school would be in control of the move. They trusted in the Head's judgement that the move was in the best interests of the school and the results of Cockburn were good and had improved South Leeds.
- SLT3 said there were both pros and cons to the move but the most important thing was what was best for the children. They felt the move would provide the school with more influence on the children when they left the school and allow the school to develop.

- SLT4 said it was important to be able to provide the children with the best start in life possible and having a link to the next stage of their education along with having an impact on the community.

The Chair asked whether SLT members had now warmed to the idea of joining the MAT?

In response SLT1 and SLT3 confirmed they had. SLT2 confirmed their previous comments still stood but they were now more positive about the move. SLT4 said they had carried out research since the last meeting and, while there would always be concerns, the positives of the move outweighed the negatives.

6.12 The Chair then asked governors if they were happy to move to a vote and the following points were raised.

Cllr Paul Wray raised three issues; that the financial information about the services the school would receive from the MAT were unclear; that the number of children on reduced hours at Cockburn was a concern; and that there were other MATs the school could join, and these options should be explored further.

In response, the Headteacher explained joining other MATs had not been explored as 75% of the children at the school went on to attend Cockburn and therefore it seemed a natural move.

Q. Why does JH think the school should join the MAT?

A. There is great benefit when schools in a locality come together to do things differently for the children. Children from disadvantaged areas face more challenges than others and research has shown they benefit more through joined up learning and teaching.

The Chair asked whether governors had any further views or were happy to move to a vote to either:

- Agree with the proposal
- Disagree with the proposal
- No decision as more information was required.

Cllr Paul Wray reiterated that enough information had not been provided to enable an informed decision to be made, only an emotional one, as the due diligence process did not commence until the process to join the MAT had begun.

Another governor stated that Cockburn was an existing MAT and the schools which had already joined Cockburn had performed better and the same could be done for the school if it joined.

6.13 **A vote took place, and the outcome was a majority decision for the school to progress with the move to join the MAT.**

Resolved:

- that the school should begin the process of applying to join the Cockburn MAT.

6.14 A governor asked whether it would be possible for governors at to visit Middleton school. JH agreed to ask the Chair of their governing body whether this could be arranged for their next meeting in the autumn.

JH

7.00 The next meeting of the governing body was due to take place on 11
7.01 July 2024 at 5pm.

The Chair asked that a standing item of 'progress / next steps with the MAT' be added to the agenda of future governing body meetings.

Agenda

The Chair closed the meeting at 6.30 p.m.