



## MILLTHORPE SCHOOL

### Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Governors Held at the School on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2014 at 6.00pm

**Present:**

Mr Trevor Burton (Headteacher)	Ms Nicola Mitchell
Ms Naomi Heaton	Mr Tim Moat ( <i>Vice-Chair</i> )
Mr Tim Hooper [ <i>until 7.20pm</i> ]	Mr Richard Newton
Mrs Katie Hurrell	Mr Martyn Pysanczyn
Ms Jenny Kent	Mr Bill Schofield
Mrs Gillian Markland-Zuiderwijk	Mrs Jane Terrett
Cllr Dave Merrett [ <i>until 7.55pm</i> ]	Ms Helen Thomas

**In Attendance:**

Mr Adam Cooper (Headteacher, Knavesmire Primary School) [*until 7.20pm*]  
 Mrs Anna Cornhill (Headteacher, Scarcroft Primary School) [*until 7.20pm*]  
 Mr Scott Butterworth (Deputy Headteacher, Millthorpe School)  
 Mr Tim Gillbanks (Deputy Headteacher, Millthorpe School)  
 Miss Amy White (Clerk)

		<b>Action</b>
<b>1</b>	<p><b>Apologies, Welcome &amp; Introductions, Declaration of Interests</b>            Apologies for absence were received from Helen Ainsworth, Don Henson and Bob Sydes (Chair of Governor). In the absence of Bob Sydes, Tim Moat (Vice Chair) chaired the meeting.</p> <p>The Vice Chair reported that Sarah Barbacane had stepped down as an LA governor due to work demands. The Governing Body recorded their thanks to Sarah for her contribution to the school and governing body.</p> <p>Adam Cooper and Anna Cornhill were introduced and welcomed to the meeting. The Vice Chair explained that Adam and Anna were in attendance to contribute to the discussions regarding school place planning and transformation proposals. This would also include the academy discussion. All Cluster headteachers had been invited to the meeting, with their governors being welcome. It was recommended and agreed that items 7, 8 and 9 would be taken after Item 2.</p>	
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Minutes of the Extra-Ordinary meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2014</b> (<i>previously distributed</i>)</p> <p><b>2.1) Corrections and Agreement</b>            The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting and were signed by the Vice Chair.</p> <p><b>2.2) Action Plan and Matters Arising</b>            The action plan was deferred and there were no matters arising.</p> <p><i>Cllr Dave Merrett entered the meeting at 6.05pm.</i></p>	
*7 *8 *9	<p><b>School Place Planning</b>  <b>Transformation Proposals</b>  <b>Academy Discussion</b></p> <p><u><i>School Place Planning</i></u>            The Headteacher gave a presentation on Primary Place Planning in York, which would be circulated to all governors after the meeting.</p> <p>With reference to the presentation slides the Headteacher highlighted that place planning would have a profound impact on all three schools (Knavesmire, Millthorpe and Scarcroft) but the schools were committed to working together to address any issues.</p> <p>Considering admissions in September 2015, the Headteacher highlighted that the Year 7 cohort would be almost at full capacity based on the number of first place applications received; 196 applications for 204 places. With reference to the LA published data within the presentation, the Headteacher advised caution as the figures were not 100% accurate.</p>	<b>Action</b>

The Headteacher reported that he had spoken to the LA's Head of School Services who had acknowledged that the lack of primary places was a big concern. Secondary schools would be impacted over the coming years, starting with the transition of the current Year 3.

With reference to the presentation slides the Headteacher highlighted the expansion constraints on Knavesmire Primary and Scarcroft Primary. He made governors aware that there had been some talk of establishing a secondary school in the city in the future, but this would depend on housing developments. The Governing Body was informed that all brand new schools established must be a free school or academy.

The Governing Body noted the considerations included within the presentation and specifically noted the following questions/suggestions for further discussion:

- *The Southbank Cluster becomes a sponsor for a new primary academy*
- *Millthorpe, Knavesmire and Scarcroft form a Learning Trust*

The Headteacher reported that a Learning Trust would not require academy conversion and there would be no major financial ties. Other schools could also join the Trust. The Governing Body considered the advantages of a Trust and the following were noted:

- Support the development of the quality of teaching and leaders
- LA Services are reducing and the Trust would provide additional support
- Supporting each other through Ofsted inspections – particularly when the LA can no longer offer this support
- High quality provision from at least the ages 4 to 16 years, with improved transition and a shared expertise.

The Headteacher asked the Governing Body to grant him permission to proceed with negotiation in both areas on behalf of the school. He said that he needed the permission of the Governing Body to access some information and enter into discussions. He stated that he would not be making any decisions but would be accessing necessary information that would be reported to governors. With Governing Body permission he aimed to produce a report by 25<sup>th</sup> March 2015. This would give the Cluster just over a year to establish a new primary school if this route was agreed.

The Vice Chair said that the proposals were significant and it was appropriate to consider the context and detail.

It was proposed and agreed that the Governing Body would establish a working group to research and discuss the options in more detail. Governors agreed that it was appropriate to consider the options and context in further detail but it was important to keep the two questions separate.

A governor asked what would happen if the school did nothing in response to the place planning concerns. Adam Cooper answered that pupils would be refused places. He explained that Knavesmire already had a waiting list and something would need to be done to address the oversubscription issues. Anna Cornhill gave an overview of discussions she had entered into with the LA regarding two form entry, classroom space and concerns regarding the available playground space at Scarcroft. She said that some messages from the LA had been contradictory and progress was slow.

Considering sponsoring a new school, Anna said that Scarcroft had a Senior Leadership Team structure that could support a new school but she had not yet had the opportunity to discuss the proposal with the school's Governing Body. Anna then stated that she did not feel a Learning Trust was predicated on the building of a new school; she was very keen to consider and be part of a Trust for the benefits previously noted.

A governor asked where a new primary school would be built and was informed that this question had been put to the Director of Children's Services, Education and Skills and the Head of School Services, who had responded by asking for suggestions. Governors discussed a number of suggestions that had been put to the LA and noted that building land in the area was at a prime price. It was expressed that transparency from the LA was required regarding available sites and it was noted that if the Headteacher was granted permission to enter into discussions this would lead to transparency.

A governor asked if it would be possible to build a new primary school on the Millthorpe School site. Scott Butterworth answered that it would involve a lot of planning as it would encroach on the playing fields.

In response to a question, the Headteacher reported that a number of companies had apparently been commissioned to look at sites for Free Schools and had visited the City. He said the likelihood of success

was unknown.

Cllr Dave Merrett outlined the Council's Local Planning Authority and procedures for reviewing planning applications. The Local Plan was briefly discussed and the impact of the upcoming general election.

The Headteacher stated that he would like to help strengthen the Southbank Cluster to provide some certainty in uncertain times and to move toward more pro-active working rather than responding to issues. Governors acknowledged the Headteacher view but a concern was raised regarding capacity within the management team to move quickly. Further queries and concerns were raised regarding the cost implication of pursuing a Learning Trust and sponsoring a primary academy.

The Vice Chair suggested moving on to discuss academy conversion.

#### Academy conversion

The Governing Body considered the position of the LA and it was expressed that the school needed to be forward thinking and prepare for LA cuts. Academy conversion was acknowledged as a possibility that would need rigorous consideration. Advantages and disadvantages of academy conversion were briefly considered and it was noted that the Governing Body had carried out research in 2012 and this could be revisited and updated by a working group. It was acknowledged that there had been some changes to the financial position of academies and conversion that would need to be reviewed.

The Governing Body briefly considered the services that the school currently purchased and how these services would be purchased if the school became an academy.

A governor referred to the school's current deficit budget and asked if this would transfer on conversion. The Vice Chair confirmed that the deficit would carry.

It was agreed that a working group would be set up to discuss the Learning Trust and Academy Conversion suggestions. The Governing Body agreed that it would be appropriate to invite representatives from the governing bodies of Knavesmire Primary and Scarcroft Primary to ensure transparency. It was agreed that the working group would scrutinise the suggestions and all available information and provide a detailed report to the Full Governing Body on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2015.

Governors revisited the Headteacher's request to be granted permission to proceed with negotiation relating to Learning Trusts and Academy Conversion. The Vice Chair reiterated that the Headteacher would not have permission to make decisions on behalf of the Governing Body. The Headteacher clarified that some discussions (with the DfE, for example) would involve sharing sensitive information and he needed permission from the Governing Body to discuss this information.

Further questions were asked regarding the Learning Trust and it was clarified that a Learning Trust could be established regardless of the status of the school. Considering the legal status of a Learning Trust, it was briefly discussed that Trusts had long-established legal frameworks. If the school followed this route the LA had offered to support the school with legal elements to help make the Trust a success.

- The Governing Body unanimously delegated authority to the Headteacher to proceed with negotiations relating to Learning Trusts and Academy Conversion.

A governor raised a concern regarding the other organisations/companies that had visited the area with a view to potentially building new free schools. It was suggested that a Freedom of Information request could be submitted to the LA to ensure that the Governing Body was fully informed on this process. It was agreed that a FOI request would only be submitted if the Headteacher or Governing Body experienced a lack of transparency from the LA during initial conversations and negotiations.

The Vice Chair agreed to set up a date for the initial Working Group meeting and circulate the paper the Governing Body had produced during their initial Academy consideration in 2012.

The Working Group membership would include:

- Katie Hurrell
- Jenny Kent
- Gillian Markland-Zuiderwijk
- Cllr Dave Merrett
- Nicki Mitchell
- Tim Moat

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- Richard Newton
- Martyn Pysanczyn
- Bill Schofield
- Bob Sydes
- Governor Representative from Knavesmire Primary School
- Governor Representative from Scarcroft Primary School

*Anna Cornhill, Adam Cooper and Tim Hooper left the meeting at 7.20pm.*

### **Items for Action**

**3**

#### **Governing Body Reconstitution (previously distributed)**

Nicki Mitchell reported that the Chairs' Forum had met twice to discuss reconstitution and a proposal had been circulated prior to the meeting. Nicki stated that the Chairs' Forum had reviewed the skills audits analysis and it had showed a good range of skills currently on the governing body. Considering the number and workload of committees the Forum had come to the conclusion that retaining a higher number of governors would be beneficial. This was reflected in the circulated proposal.

Following advice from the Clerk the following amendments to the proposal were suggested:

- The total number of governors could not be a range of "15 to 18" and it was proposed that the number was agreed at 18 governors
- The number of co-opted governors could not be a range of "not less than seven and no more than ten". It was proposed that the total number of co-opted governors be ten.
- The Governing Body unanimously approved the above amendments.

**Amend**

Considering the number of elected parents, it was noted that this had been reduced from seven to five and there must be a minimum of two. The Clerk highlighted that reconstitution was offering governing bodies more flexibility to recruit required skills; having a high number of elected parents reduced this flexibility to appoint governors to fill skills gaps. She explained that the Governing Body could reduce the number of elected parents but continue to appoint parents as co-opted governors – thereby maintaining positive links and parental involvement. The aim was not to reduce the number of parents on the governing body but to provide greater control over the skills appointed.

The Governing Body discussed the suggestion and a governor expressed that parent governor elections provided a democratic process and the number of elected parents should not, therefore, be greatly reduced. The Governing Body considered the recruitment process and the potential difficulties recruiting co-opted governors. The Clerk reiterated that co-opted governors could still be appointed from the parent or staff group and it was acknowledged that co-opting governors from a range of categories provided greater flexibility and creativity.

- Following rigorous discussion it was agreed that the new Instrument of Government would be submitted with five elected parent governor positions. The new constitution was noted as follows:
  - One LA governor
  - One staff governor
  - One headteacher
  - Five parent governor
  - Ten co-opted governors
  - Total number of governors: 18
- The Governing Body agreed that the new Instrument of Government would come into effect on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2015.

Nicki reported that her term of office as a parent governor was due to end on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2015 and Tim Hooper's term as a parent was due to end on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2015. Advice had been sought from the Clerk and it was suggested that Nicki and Tim be appointed as Associate Members with voting rights on their committees until the formal reconstitution of the governing body on 25<sup>th</sup> March. Governors discussed the reduction in the number of parent governors in the new constitution and agreed that it would not be beneficial to hold a parent election when the category would be reducing from seven to five.

- The Governing Body appointed Nicki Mitchell as an Associate Member with voting rights on committees with effect from 11<sup>th</sup> January 2015.

Proposed: Cllr Dave Merrett      Seconded: Tim Moat      Agreed: Unanimously

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Governing Body appointed Tim Hopper as an associate Member with voting rights on committees with effect from 7<sup>th</sup> February 2015.</li> </ul> <p>Proposed: Cllr Dave Merrett    Seconded: Tim Moat    Agreed: Unanimously</p>	
4	<p><b>Schools Financial Value Standard</b> <i>(previously distributed)</i></p> <p>The Governing Body received the SFVS which had been reviewed and recommended for approval by the Finance and Staffing Committee.</p> <p>The following sections were queried:</p> <p><i>Q.A5: Are business interests of governing body members and staff properly registered and taken into account so as to avoid conflicts of interest?</i></p> <p>A governor highlighted that the evidence column specifically referenced a business interest register for staff but not governors. It was confirmed that the Governing Body completed annual Declaration of Business Interest forms and there was the opportunity for governors to declare specific interests at the beginning of each meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was agreed that the SFVS would be updated to include the above information.</li> </ul> <p><i>Q.A6: Does the school have access to an adequate level of financial expertise, including when specialist finance staff are absent, eg on sick leave?</i></p> <p>A governor asked why this section had not been picked up as an action when the answer was 'In Part'. Helen Thomas reported that the Finance and Staffing Committee had discussed this and she had held further discussions with the Business Manager as part of her link governor role. Helen said that new admin structures were in place to strengthen the team and the school continued to look at ways of further strengthening this area. A governor suggested that support and expertise from partner schools could be explored.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subject to the above amendment the Governing Body unanimously approved the SFVS.</li> </ul>	Amend
5	<p><b>Services to Schools</b></p> <p>The Headteacher reported that the Services to Schools booklet had been recently circulated and provided a very clear offer from the LA. He explained that some services were statutory but schools could choose whether or not to purchase the majority of services from the LA. The Headteacher then said that over the next couple of years the school would be reviewing all services to ensure they were receiving the best value; particularly considering the deficit recovery plan.</p> <p>It was noted that the Finance and Staffing Committee considered bought-in services in greater detail.</p>	
6	<p><b>Headteacher's Report</b> <i>(previously distributed)</i></p> <p>The Headteacher highlighted that he was very pleased with the number of Year 6 pupils who had expressed Millthorpe as their first preference. He said that a lot of very positive comments had been received from parents during recent open evenings.</p> <p>From his report, the Headteacher highlighted that there had been an increase in the number of exclusions but the reasons were being addressed and would be considered in detail at a relevant committee meeting. Scott Butterworth reported that all possible steps had been taken to support the students and two exclusions had been managed moves to other schools. Cllr Merrett reported that as part of his link governor role he had met Scott to discuss behaviour and exclusions. He stated that extensive work was taking place to support students and address issues and the low number of behaviour issues and exclusions was due to the hard work of Scott and his team.</p> <p>Further to the information within his written report, the Headteacher reported that RAISE Online performance data had just been published. Tim Gillbanks tabled the sections of RAISE marked specifically for governor consideration. He then made governors aware that the data would not be validated until January / February 2015.</p> <p>Governors reviewed the tabled data and were informed that all data related to first entry results and not best entry. Despite this, governors expressed that a lot of the data was highlighted green and therefore significantly positive. Tim highlighted that the school was in the top 17% of all schools Nationally for Best 8 and explained how Best 8 was calculated.</p> <p>Governors noted that the report showed 60% of students achieved 5A* - C grades including English and</p>	

	<p>Maths based on first entry. Considering best entry results, this increased to 71%.</p> <p>The Headteacher made governors aware that a number of changes were being introduced in key phases over the coming years and would impact assessment procedures.</p> <p>Governors expressed that the data was positive and would be reviewed in greater detail at the next Achievement and Curriculum Committee meeting.</p>	<b>A&amp;C</b>
10	<p><b>Classroom Visit Protocol</b> <i>(previously distributed)</i></p> <p>Helen Thomas reported that classroom visits would be organised to support the development of the Governing Body by providing an insight and greater understanding of teaching and learning in the classroom. The protocol had been produced by Helen and the Headteacher to outline the purpose of the visits and clearly state that governors would not be visiting classrooms to make judgements.</p> <p>Helen proposed agreeing the protocol so it could be implemented to help Governors become more effective.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Governing Body unanimously approved the Classroom Visit Protocol and stated that it was even handed and well written.</li> </ul> <p>Governors briefly discussed the link governor role and how to arrange classroom visits. It was agreed that requests for a classroom visit would go to Lesley Buckley to coordinate. A visit form would be completed after each visit and uploaded onto the website. Governors would also note their visit under the standing agenda item at a relevant committee meeting.</p> <p><i>Cllr. Dave Merrett left the meeting at 7.55pm.</i></p>	
11	<p><b>Policies for Review:</b></p> <p><b>11.1) Dignity at Work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Dignity at Work Policy was unanimously approved subject to the correction of typing errors.</li> </ul> <p><b>11.2) Attendance Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Attendance Management Policy was unanimously approved.</li> </ul> <p><b>11.3) Budget Management including appendices</b></p> <p>The Governing Body discussed the appendices to the Budget Management Policy and noted that they had been agreed the previous year but the circulated Policy did not include the agreed delegations. It was agreed that the updated appendices would be circulated for information and consideration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Subject to the above, the Budget Management Policy was unanimously approved.</li> </ul>	<b>Action</b>
12	<p><b>Committee Minutes</b></p> <p><b>12.1) Achievement and Curriculum Committee</b></p> <p><i>a) Minutes from 15<sup>th</sup> October 2014 (previously distributed)</i></p> <p>The minutes from the meeting were received and noted.</p> <p><i>b) Terms of Reference (previously distributed)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Governing Body unanimously approved the Terms of Reference for the Achievement and Curriculum Committee.</li> </ul> <p><b>12.2) Teaching and Learning Committee</b></p> <p><i>a) Minutes from 4<sup>th</sup> November 2014 (previously distributed)</i></p> <p>The minutes from the meeting were received and noted.</p> <p><i>b) Terms of Reference (previously distributed)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Governing Body unanimously approved the Terms of Reference for the Teaching and Learning Committee.</li> </ul> <p><b>12.3) Finance and Staffing Committee</b></p> <p><i>a) Minutes from 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014 (previously distributed)</i></p> <p>The minutes from the meeting were received and noted.</p> <p><i>b) Terms of Reference (previously distributed)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Governing Body unanimously approved the Terms of Reference for the Finance and Staffing</li> </ul>	



**Action Plan following the Meeting of the Full Governing Body on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2014**

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Agenda</b>	<b>Person</b>	<b>Date</b>
1.	Circulate Primary Place Planning presentation to all governors	7/8/9	Headteacher	Asap
2.	Set up Working Group meeting and e-mail relevant academy documents/papers	7/8/9	Tim Moat	Asap
3.	Circulate Budget Management Policy appendices to all governors	11.3	Clerk	asap
	<b>Ongoing or Future Actions</b>			
	Invite governors to the SIP session with Staff and involve governors in the working groups			
	Hold earlier discussion with all governor before drafting the governance section of the SIP			
	Governors to visit assemblies and receive more information on the school's collective worship/activities			

**Future Agenda Items**

- Learning Trust and Academy Conversion reports
- Reconstitution of the Governing Body – approving Core Group and co-opting governors

**Achievement and Curriculum Committee:** RAISE Online