

**PERRY HALL MULTI ACADEMY TRUST**

<b>MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LOCAL GOVERNING BODY OF WOODTHORNE PRIMARY SCHOOL HELD REMOTELY AT 5.00 PM ON TUESDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2020</b>
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PRESENT:	Mrs V Baker	
	Mrs A Cheema	CEO, Perry Hall MAT
	Mrs J Ferretti	
	Ms A Gibson	Chair
	Mr T Hinkley	Headteacher
	Ms L Hodgkiss (part)	
IN ATTENDANCE:	Mrs A Boyce	Clerk
	Mr D Asbury (part)	Executive Headteacher, Perry Hall MAT
	Ms R Kohli	Executive Headteacher, Perry Hall MAT Teaching School
NO APOLOGIES:	Mr R Khular	
	Mr I Moore	

Minute Number	Minute	Actions
0574	<p><b><u>APOLOGIES AND WELCOME</u></b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed Governors to the meeting.</p>	
0575	<p><b><u>DECLARATION OF INTEREST/CONFIDENTIALITY/CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS</u></b></p> <p>Attention was drawn to the Articles of Association relating conflicts of interest, including but not limited to any Personal Financial Interest and Related Party Transactions.</p> <p>Governors were advised that if a person had any interest in a contract, proposed contract or matter under consideration, s/he should disclose the fact and take no part in the consideration, discussion or vote in respect of the contract or matter and withdraw from the meeting.</p> <p>Governors were reminded that care should be taken to ensure that they were aware of agenda items of a confidential nature. In addition, they were advised to ensure that minutes of their meetings did not include information of a confidential nature as the</p>	

	<p>draft minutes were considered public documents as soon as approved by the Chair of the meeting.</p> <p>The Clerk requested that Governors consider if any items were of a confidential nature. Governors were advised that these items should be considered in private.</p>	
0576	<p><b><u>PROPOSAL FOR CHANGES TO SCHOOL OPENING TIMES</u></b></p> <p>The Chair asked the Headteacher to put forward his proposal (Appendix 1) for the changes to school opening times. The Chair confirmed that she had already discussed these with the Headteacher.</p> <p>The proposal was shared on screen and the Headteacher was asked to explain the context and challenges which sat behind the proposal. The benefits of the proposal and next steps would then be detailed. It was explained that the main reason for the proposal were the diverse changes to school which had occurred and the need to apply resources to achieve the best outcome for children. There was a finite resource and it was important to use resources and staff more cost effectively. It has been found that the knowledge gap was wider than academics first thought and the School must ensure that it was best supporting children in order to close the gap over the next few years. A shorter school week could allow more resources to support children, while staff can use Friday afternoons to do PPA.</p> <p><b>The CEO asked if this was being proposed due to Covid-19 and questioned what would be done in the following year.</b> The Headteacher explained that this was not due to Covid-19 or the resulting bubbles but was to close the gaps in learning. <b>The CEO then gave an example of it taking three years for the gap to close and asked if the school would then revert to a five day week.</b> The Headteacher confirmed that this would not be the intention.</p> <p>The CEO advised that this would be a change for staff CPD, first quality teaching and would allow for intervention to support most able children and to support those who need additional catch up. HLTAs had been doing PPA cover which means that those year groups lose out. When asked if there would be HLTA redundancies, it was confirmed this would not be the case.</p> <p><b>The Headteacher was asked by a Governor if he had considered that some parents may see this as reducing the learning time of their children.</b> The Headteacher agreed that, whilst it may appear to be the case, it was proposed to reduce the lunch hour and extend the morning session by 15 minutes. What would be lost in teaching time on Friday afternoon would be recaptured in the course of the week. There would be longer sessions for reading and maths, more focussed interventions in the morning with the extra 15 minutes and focus on those core subjects. It would also be possible to use the extra 15 minutes for PHSE as that sometimes got lost to other subjects. Essentially, the school will be redistributing time.</p> <p>The Chair then asked if questions could be taken following the Headteacher's presentation of the proposal.</p>	

The Headteacher felt that the benefits of the change would further improve provision for the children and improve consistency for quality first teaching. It will provide SEN pupils with greater support. It was clarified that it was not just HLTAs who were being called out for PPA as level 3 staff are also called out when they could be used to support pupils in classrooms. In terms of mental health and wellbeing, there is a need for an inclusion lead role as the staff are seeing more pupils with difficulties in this area and are unable to help them. There were three TAs supporting with inclusion but the school did not have the capacity to meet these needs. The change in hours would allow staff to join Trust wide planning as most schools have PPA on Friday afternoons in the Trust. Outstanding teachers across the Trust help with planning to achieve consistency across the board.

**The Headteacher was asked to clarify the end time on Fridays as the information shared on screen still stated 3.15 pm.** It was confirmed that the day would end at 1.15 pm although a staggered start may be needed. **A Governor then asked where the second hour would come from** and the Chair advised that it would come from a reduction in playtime. There was no legal stipulation for KS1 and KS2 is 23 hours. Afternoon break would be lost for KS2, but pupils can request a five minute break if needed. **The Chair queried if the reduction of lunch and breaks is the right thing to do as pupils needed to be allowed time to eat and play.** The Headteacher felt it necessary to separate Covid-19 and normal times as, currently, both staff and pupils were finding lunchtimes hard. Many Wolverhampton schools now operated a 45 to 50 minute lunch. Statistically, most behaviour problems which occur during lunch happen in the last ten minutes. When the situation returns to normal, 45 minutes would be sufficient. A Governor felt that, especially for Early Years, incidents usually happen towards the end of lunch so a shorter lunch would have a positive impact and support pupils. The Executive Headteacher of Perry Hall MAT Teaching School agreed that it has been found to be beneficial for pupils to have a shorter lunch. In terms of reducing the afternoon breaks, from experience, a full afternoon meant good flow and sometimes there could be a natural break half way when children need it and children quite enjoy that flow. **The Chair asked if there is evidence of some issues being seen towards the end of lunch breaks.** The Headteacher reported that generally, the pupils behave well. There has been a clear difference with Covid-19 due to the length of lunch and issues arise usually after the half hour point. If children become bored, they will find something to do, whether that be what they should or should not be doing. For KS2, they do not currently have an automatic afternoon break but teachers do break if necessary.

**The Chair then returned to the fundamental question of why the proposal was being made and referred to the resourcing issue. If the school is reducing the working week but not teaching time, it was asked why more resources cannot be factored in.** The CEO responded that this was not possible due to financial constraints. The school was still recovering from a deficit position and currently had a balanced budget but it was unknown what budgets would look like moving forward. Based on the postcode of Woodthorne, the budget would not be as favourable as those in more challenging areas as funding is based on deprivation and Pupil Premium numbers. The key aspect of the proposal is around quality first teaching and consistency and bridging those gaps. Pupils succeed across the Trust due to high quality teachers and identified groups are given support. The minimum staffing is a class teacher and TA per class and the proposal will allow those support staff to do quality first teaching so they are prepared for the next class. They are currently only able to do the bare minimum. The Headteacher agreed that staff are identifying pupils who need extra support and are setting them up but not able to follow through. Before Covid-19, this was a difficult situation but was now worse.

**The Chair accepted that the school was ultimately trying to make the best of a bad situation but wondered if the financial impact was a good enough reason to shorten the school week to solve this problem rather than benefitting pupils.** The Executive Headteacher of Perry Hall MAT explained that the reasons were two-fold. There was a finance issue, however, the proposal gives staff the chance to improve their CPD which helps them to improve their teaching. The viewpoint of a parent can be understood but there are positives and this needs to be clearly communicated. The Chair felt that some parents may see that there is no benefit to them, only to the school. The Executive Headteacher of Perry Hall MAT Teaching School advised that it was not 4.5 days, but just a reduction of two hours of the teaching week. Those two hours will enable staff to have effective CPD. The Chair noted that the proposal stated “change” and not “reduce” but was immediately drawn to the mention of 4.5 days.

A Governor from another school agreed that, aside from the financial reasons, there have been some issues at playtimes in her school and are looking at reducing playtimes. It was important to consider how this will be communicated to parents, some will understand, some not. Ultimately, teachers are entitled to PPA and this time must be provided for during the week. This proposal provides consistency with the same teachers teaching the same pupils throughout the week. There needed to be some careful planning to determine how to communicate this to parents. The Chair agreed that the message was vital and that some parents will say that teachers have had time off over lockdown and were now getting additional time. It was important to bring the focus back to the pupils.

The CEO stressed that CPD for staff was a workload issue and the Trust was improving what it was currently providing and allowing more one to one support. The proposal would allow staff to work with the teachers of other year groups with them all doing planning at the same time without being interrupted. Even if teachers have time during the week allocated, if someone was covering their class and something happens to a child, they have to step away from planning to deal with the pupils.

The Chair recognised that those who are not in education do not see that teachers need this time and do not necessarily realise the pressures which teachers face. A Governor suggested that that needed to be explained to parents along with how the changes would work in reality.

The Headteacher advised that pupils have golden time on Friday afternoons and it will be necessary to look at how this is utilised elsewhere. There needs to be a balanced curriculum with a lot of planning entwined with English across different subjects. Staff would need to consider how to incorporate topics in to English planning. One other aspect to be considered will be DT as, within a week there are not enough hours. A solution could be to only do DT in the final week of term where it is a focus and still covered. The Executive Headteacher of Perry Hall MAT Teaching School felt that, with the new curriculum in place, it would be possible to cover DT and doing this throughout the term allows pupils to reapply thought consistently rather than doing it in one chunk.

A Governor commented that, for any vulnerable children, more time spent at home may put them at more risk. The CEO advised that SEN, vulnerable pupils and children of working parents would still have the same provision to cover childcare. It would be necessary to do a questionnaire to find out how many parents would need that childcare provision to determine if it was feasible. The Headteacher informed the Governors that there are less than 60 children in the afterschool club so would not expect it to be more

than that. The Chair asked that the Headteacher does not underestimate this as some parents may take advantage of the childcare provision as it would be free. The Headteacher suggested that parents may benefit from the extra two hours as this would give them the opportunity to take their child to dental and medical appointments without taking children out of school. However, the CEO pointed out that, if children are taken out of school for such appointments, they do still receive their mark. The Headteacher agreed that this was the case and did not impact on attendance rates but did impact on learning time. The Chair urged that the message communicated to parents be that children will not lose learning time.

**The Chair then asked what quantifiable benefit did the school think would be seen and how quickly.** The CEO responded that the quantifiable benefits will be that pupils will be taught consistently by their own class teacher who will deliver quality first teaching, pupils who need support and intervention will receive it in a timely manner and teachers will be able to follow up on any issues as they know their pupils best and will be able to be there to support them. **The Chair asked if this would give results** and the Headteacher felt that gaps would closed more quickly than at present. Whilst there would not be full catch up, there would be faster improvement within half a term's time.

**A Governor then asked if there were any teachers who work part time or job share where PPA is not currently possible to take.** It was confirmed that there was no job shares but one part time teacher and the CEO advised that part time staff take an hour somewhere else and was covered by the support member of staff in that year group.

**The Chair then asked the Headteacher to provide more information on timescales.** The Headteacher advised that the proposal would need to go to consultation with parents as soon as possible and that the change itself depended on consultation process. **When asked how long this would take,** the CEO advised that there was no set timeline as long as parents were consulted. An email address will be set up for parents to respond to and questions raised will be brought to the Governing Board to answer. The Chair suggested undertaking surveys and, if overwhelmed with questions, could offer a townhall on zoom as parents needed to be given this option. **The Chair asked for clarification on the timing and process and asked for confirmation that it was proposed as a permanent change and not a trial.** This was confirmed by the Headteacher as being correct. **The Chair then asked if the proposal was to implement the change whilst still under Covid-19 restrictions** and the Headteacher confirmed this to be the case adding that the school would liaise with the other schools in the Trust to see how they were operating this. The CEO confirmed that, if the consultation takes place between now and the end of term, it would then be possible to put the changes in place after February half term.

[MR D ASBURY AND MS L HODGKISS LEFT THE MEETING AT THIS POINT]

The CEO suggested sending out the initial consultation with the survey in the background and follow this up with an online consultation in the New Year. The change would then be implemented after February half term. The Chair felt that it would be necessary to give some breathing space as it could go either way and there would be a better idea of what the Covid-19 situation looks like by then.

The Chair then asked Governors if they were generally supportive of the plan and the response was that this would provide consistency and that, allowing teachers to have this time for PPA will be very beneficial. The Chair stressed that there needs to be very careful

	<p>consideration before the consultation, making sure that messages to parents are very clear. The CEO agreed to work with the Executive Headteacher of Perry Hall MAT Teaching School and the Headteacher to draft a letter showing the rationale and Governors would have sight of this before it was sent out. Any amendments would then be made and the letter would go to parents on a Friday which will allow them the weekend to digest the contents. Emails received would be forwarded to all Governors so they are aware of all comments coming through and the Governing Board would then meet in two weeks, answer any questions and send them back out to parents.</p>	
0577	<p><b><u>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</u></b></p> <p>No items of any other business were identified.</p>	
0578	<p><b><u>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</u></b></p> <p>Governors confirmed that the next meeting of the Local Governing Body would be held at the School at 6.00 pm on Monday 18 January 2021.</p>	

**The meeting closed at 6.05 pm.**

Signed: ..........  
 (Chair of Local Governing Body)

Date: .....18 January 2021.....