



West Hill Primary School
(a partner in the SMILE Learning Trust)
Beech Park, West Hill, Ottery St Mary, Devon EX11 1UQ
01404 812599
admin@west-hill-primary.devon.sch.uk
Headteacher: Cheryl Boulton



West Hill Primary School

Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting

held on Thursday November 24th 2016 at 6.30 pm at the school

Actions (Bold) GB questions, decision making and challenges (*Italics*)

Present: Cheryl Boulton, Dot Bioletti, Jonathan Brook, Hilary Eade, Matt Fripp, Ian Heard, Debbie Hudson, Jenny Meredith, Sally Sycamore, Sue Tovey and Chris Webster

Clerk: Margaret Whitlock

Training – Babcock Ofsted Talk and Website information:

The GB welcomed Debbie Clapshaw (DC) from Babcock. The key points of her talk included:

- Follow up from the WHPS Review of Governance and Governor Priorities for Ofsted
- Building a strong GB/HT relationship, following the appointment of a new HT, as partners in the leadership team of the school. DC stated that the GB should aim to develop a sense of trust with the HT, enabling the GB to hold the HT to account through effective challenge. This honesty and openness will enable the GB to support the HT in all aspects of school life.
- Ensuring practice is accurately assessed as “outstanding” against Ofsted criteria and the GB can provide evidence to support this. Governors confirmed that Part 2 agenda items and minutes are no longer used unless advised by the Clerk.
- Key areas to focus on ahead of Ofsted include clarity of vision for the school and how this is shared with parents, pupils and the wider community as well as SEN and disadvantaged pupils and how the GB is focusing on the gap. The GB should know how Pupil Premium, Sports premium and other grants are spent in the school and the impact this funding has on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils; in particular the more able disadvantaged. DC explained, *in response to a query from IH as to how this impact is measured by Ofsted*, that they use assessment data such as RaiseonLine. CB informed the GB that School Pupil Tracker results were deemed good for the school, with the results of PP children last year showing greater progress than the national average for PP but less progress than the non PP children at WHPS. DC stated that Bradley Simmons, the South West HMI, had informed schools that progress should be measured from where pupils start at school. DC confirmed that much assessment data was not easy for Governors to assimilate, but that it was the role of the HT to explain it in accessible terms.
- The website is a major focus for Ofsted. The challenge is to ensure it is up to date and compliant. DC explained that an inspection can be triggered by statutory data not being uploaded on a school website and she added that Ofsted can also trawl for negative press releases about schools. DC advised that WHPS should update its website to ensure the main focus is taken away from the last Ofsted, which had taken place in June 2007. She advised



that there should be a greater emphasis on current successes such as Investors in People. CB informed DC that the website was under review and that a three stage programme was being put in place, with the aim of supporting day to day uploading of documents, ensuring compliance and making it more user friendly, while taking account of the potential cost. JB wanted to know the likely frequency of changes to website requirements. DC stated this could be as frequent as termly, depending on changes made by the DfE. She reminded the GB that these changes were sent out in the Clerks Alert, which is forwarded to the GB weekly by the Clerk. Further information about website requirements can be found on the DfE website under the effectiveness of maintained schools:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-maintained-schools-must-publish-online>

- DC reminded the GB that “outstanding” is a difficult grade to maintain and raised a question as to how Devon could currently be judged 53% “outstanding” when 93% of schools had been graded outstanding in the past.
- Governors should show commitment to their development through regular training as outlined in the Ofsted framework 2016: <https://schoolleaders.thekeysupport.com/school-evaluation-and-improvement/inspection/after-inspection/proposed-changes-to-the-inspection-of-2018good-and-outstanding-schools/>

This meeting, as well as online or LA event training and any other relevant professional development in the work place can all add to a Governor’s portfolio. The value of networking was noted as well the importance of keeping up to date when attending external training with Governors from other schools who may have had an Ofsted inspection more recently. All training information should be communicated to the Clerk who will keep an up to date record ready for Ofsted.

Governors discussed some of the Ofsted grade descriptors for the effectiveness of leadership and management in pairs, sharing observations:

- Point 1 – Governors put forward ideas for ensuring a culture that enables pupils and staff to excel as requiring effective training and cpd, rigorous appraisal and performance management, GB visits to monitor outcomes, setting high expectations for all and GB ownership and awareness of the budget .
- Point 2 – Governor focus on outcomes for all pupils and are uncompromising in their ambition Governors thought requires the GB to have ownership of the SDP, monitor use and impact of PP and related funding, knowledge of Raise onLine and other assessment data, ownership of the budget, gathering of evidence though visits and subsequent challenge if pupils are not achieving expected standards or demonstrating progress.
- Point 4 – Effective deployment of staff and resources related to outcomes in pupils Governors suggested requires Governor Visits related to lead roles and SDP priorities, effective challenge of the HT report and Subject Leader reports and discussion in meetings as evidenced in minutes.
- Point 5 – The GB has an accurate understanding of the school’s effectiveness informed by the views of pupils, staff and parents. The GB acknowledged this area needs work as the last questionnaire sent to parents in January 2016 was related to HT recruitment. DC advised that all WHPS stakeholder views need to be sought and the exchange of ideas maintained so that all are aware of the role and impact of the GB on the school. CB acknowledged that many parents do not understand the role of the Governors. DC encouraged the GB to raise their profile by attending Parents Evenings and similar events to encourage parents to ask questions and grow their understanding of the GB. This is important as Governors hold the

vision and are the guardians of the school on a consistent basis, with accountability for the use of school funding. DC agreed that Governors, as volunteers, hold much responsibility and each is asked to give significant time and commitment.

- Point 6 – Incisive performance management resulting in professional development, supporting teacher improvement to ensure highly effective teaching across the school
Governors stated requires the GB to oversee appraisal and performance management and the related policies. They should check outcomes and performance in the classroom as this and link to teacher’s pay. It was noted that the P&P Committee had had held a rigorous meeting with the HT to challenge pay proposals and checked evidence was there to support the targets set had been met, as evidenced in the minutes.
- DC advised that a file of evidence be kept ready for Ofsted for ease of accessibility. This should focus on areas where clear evidence demonstrates improvement. Governors should aim to be available for an inspection as the inspector will want to interview representatives of the GB; in particular and if possible the safeguarding governor. Governors will be expected to show depth of knowledge and the impact of policies. The inspector will also talk to pupils and do extensive book scrutinies, with the inspection extending to two days if required. CB underlined the importance of the SLT and GB knowing the weaknesses of the school and being able to demonstrate what has been put in place to deal with these areas. DC suggested that a rehearsal of Ofsted conversations would be useful and that one question could be included in each FGB meeting. CB agreed and added that the meeting to begin work on the SEF with a working party of Governors would also develop an understanding of the Ofsted grades and plot where WHPS stands realistically at present under the new framework.

SS thanked Debbie Clapshaw for her helpful training.

PART 1

1. Introduction:

Apologies – Kara Green who has resigned from the date of this meeting, following the agreed month for a handover period. **(Action - MW to inform Babcock using Form H and to update Edubase)**

- a. **Declaration of Interests/ check RBI and remind of Governor Code of Conduct:** JB, IH and SS amended their RBIs and signed them. The requirements to maintain up to date RBIs and declare any conflicts of interest during meetings was given by SS.

2. Confirmation of Minutes of meeting 22.9.16:

Matters arising from minutes:

Completed annotated actions listed below. Outstanding actions –

- a. (2a) MF to submit the outstanding financial reports by the end of the term - **done**
(6a) MF to meet with CH and LD on one of the days CH is in to discuss the budget and CB to contact LD to arrange- **planned for 8.12.16**

3. Confirmation of Minutes of meeting 3.11.16:

Matters arising from minutes:

Completed annotated actions listed below. Outstanding actions –

- a. (4a) The GB to agree a Governor who would have responsibility for monitoring the WHPS website on a monthly basis - this was deferred until after the Babcock review of the website. The review was agreed by the GB as a sound use of funds to ensure WHPS website is Ofsted compliant. **(Action – CB to arrange with Babcock for the review of the WHPS website.)** Further

communications with Jim Cocks, a local man who has offered to provide some support for the WHPS website, are planned. **(Action - JB to meet with Jim Cocks to give him a better understanding of how to access the school website and the technology to make the necessary amendments.)** MF stated that he had begun a review of the website using the DfE framework, which he will continue as it would support the work that Babcock is to do. **(Action – MF to produce a document monitoring the content and composition of the WHPS website against the DfE criteria.)** MW confirmed, in response to a query from JM as to how policies can be judged up to date, that this is recorded on the Policy Overview. However, a concern was noted that those placed on the website before September 2016 may have no dates to denote the last review. The latest policy overview is displayed on Google Cloud and sent to Governors at the end of each term.

- b. (4a) CB to amend and update the SDP, as agreed in discussions during the meeting and will circulate it to the GB once completed - **done**
- c. (4b) CB and SS to revise the Visits programme and circulate for the GB to agree in the FGB Meeting – 24.11.16 – **this will be completed once the Lead roles have been clarified and a decision made on whether FGB meetings become monthly replacing the need for committee meetings.** It was noted that the delay in the generation of the SDP had meant that the number of visits had dropped back as the focus from the SDP had not been agreed. Once out Governors were encouraged by SS to plan visits for next term. The Clerk advised that email addresses are included on the programme for Governors to make arrangements directly with staff and to send their report for their agreement, prior to passing to the Clerk for mailing round the GB.
(5) Governors – DB, HE, IH and SS to meet at 9.15 am on 8.12.16, to work on the SEF – **arranged with subsequent meetings to plan.**

4. Date of the next FGB Meeting: January 19th 2017 at 6.30 pm

5. RAISEonLine:

CB set a group task to enable Governors to gain a better understanding of the outcomes for WHPS and improve their ability to access information. They worked in groups with members of staff using selected pages from Raise Online to collect data informing them of the characteristics of the school, Year 1 & 2 Phonics results, EYFS, KS1 & KS2 results. CB noted that though 63 pages in length, much of the RAISE Online data is duplicated in different forms. The Governors completed part of this task and aimed to complete the remainder at home, being invited to email CB with any queries or to gain feedback on the finished work. **(Action – CB to email the RaiseonLine task to the GB for completion.) CB hoped that this would give governors knowledge of WHPS results in the context of national results.**

*JB asked if CB could highlight three concerns that stood out from the data for the GB to focus on. SS agreed and suggested an executive summary outlining any concerns could be sent out the GB and School Improvement Lead, to include key issues such as the boys' handwriting; as had been noted. **(Action – CB to compile a page of data outlining strengths and weaknesses drawn from RaiseonLine data to send out to the GB.)***

6. Budget Monitor:

Governors had been sent the Budget monitor for Month 6 and had received the Budget Monitor for Month 7 that day, as it had just been produced by CH and LD.

MF noted a small movement with the over spend. The concern raised previously around the apparent deficit in the income for educational visits was clarified and it was explained that the money was forecasted for spending due to the requirement for deposits to be paid by WHPS for the PGL residential trip, ahead of the money being paid in by parents. The GB was reassured to hear therefore that the school is not running a deficit on trips. The increase in Clerking hours and other administration costs were noted. The cost of replacing the aging skylights was raised and could be met by using the unassigned capital money of £5588.00.

The money spent on Maths resources was clarified as being spent on the new Maths Scheme and text books to meet the requirements of the new curriculum.

The impact of DCC taking back £55.00 per pupil in April was also shown on the Budget Monitor and Governors recognised the concern that CB had raised for the future resourcing of the school. MF stated he would be discussing this issue further in his planned finance meeting in December. Governors questioned the phrase “capitalising the cost of chairs”. It was explained that this money is held in a notional pot and was not ring fenced but could be used to purchase other items if that need proved greater.

DB asked if the 1% increment had been included in the budget, which CB confirmed should have been done though it did not occur automatically as in the past? (Action – CB to check that staff 1% increments have been included in the budget and communicate findings to the GB.)

7. Committee Reports:

Governors had read the minutes for the Teaching & Learning, Pay & Performance and Resources Committee Meetings and had no challenges or questions.

8. Head teacher’s Report - including Safeguarding Children and Child Protection:

The report had been sent to Governors ahead of the meeting and questions and challenges were invited:

- Governors noted that they found the information on the front page was helpful.
- *JB enquired whether the statemented pupil had left, which CB confirmed.*
- *CPD was questioned by Governors as it appeared that not all staff had attended training. CB clarified that training for all staff had taken place in school but that not all had attended external courses since September.*
- *MF queried the number of new children joining the school since September and the impact on teaching in those classes. CB agreed this was a high number but that they had filled places in good time ensuring that numbers were at their peak for the January census; on which the school’s funding was based. CB, however, acknowledged that the academic needs of these pupils had to be met. MF was concerned that support could be put in place promptly, noting the tight amount of time in which to raise standards to match those expected for the year group by the end of the year. CB was pleased to report that progress had been observed but was concerned that this took significant TA resources. SS concluded that if pupils were to join later in the year this process would be even more difficult and outcomes for the year group would be affected. CB reported that some who had joined the school had been considered top group pupils in their previous school, but had then found themselves to be in a lower position amongst a class of high achieving pupils at WHPS. CB was reassured that, provided no one left, with a full school there would be greater stability.*
- *CB was asked what information could be passed to the GB by CB following her day at the DAPH leadership conference. CB outlined the programme which included Ofsted updates, information on the budget and data by Bradley Simmons (HMI) and HT work life balance.*
- *SS asked about the number of unauthorised absences this term and whether they were higher than expected. CB confirmed this appeared so. She outlined how parents had been fined in Swindon for taking children out of school for anything other than exceptional circumstances, noting the significant impact on pupils’ learning; which was often not retrievable. CB recognised that Devon appeared not to impose sanctions and that at WHPS all parents had not been given permission to remove their child, but had proceeded anyway. The reason appeared not to be financial, but due to work or personal reasons. DB asked what the GB should be doing to counter this issue. SS felt that the reasons should be assessed for each pupil and judged accordingly. JB believed it is important to educate parents around the implications for their children, though SS stated that parental values were also a factor. The GB agreed it was important for the GB to decide what strategy is right for the school. It was agreed that handling the problem is an operational issue for CB who will handle each case on its merits.*
- *JM sought clarification that teachers and staff had the annual update for Safeguarding, which CB confirmed had taken place on the second inset day at the start of the term.*

- *JM asked about the progress of CPOMs, which CB stated had been successfully demonstrated in a recent staff meeting and would be taken up by the school. (Action - CB to inform JM further about CPOMs in the next Safeguarding meeting.)*
- CB explained about her recent learning walk with the SLT, when she had looked at the quality of the teaching and learning environment. She had fed back to staff noting that both positive and negative feedback had been given with the intention that staff could grow and improve to meet the high expectations set consistently across the school. It was noted there had also been a book scrutiny of writing across the school by HE and Emma Powley, which supported observations made by CB. *The GB agreed that the key to school improvement lay in all staff being open to advice as the HT is ultimately responsible for ensuring that all standards meet the criteria for an outstanding school. SS believed this set the culture for the school and IH was pleased to note the consistency of feedback from CB and HE in her Governor visit. They supported CB in recognising that individual feedback is the most effective way to make improvements.* CB is to monitor Maths in her next learning walk with the SLT.
- Governors found the calendar of events at the end of the HT report helpful as way for them to increase their involvement in school life and raise the profile of the GB.

CB requested that Governors inform her of any concerns or suggestions for the HT Report content and format. JB asked that a table be included showing SEND pupil information on progress, to which CB agreed. She observed that at present there are too many on the register for the GB to track, but that this was being addressed.

Governors thanked CB for her concise and informative report, which had enabled them to build their understanding of the school; its staff and pupils.

9. Policies, Statements & Provisions:

- a. Positive Behaviour and Discipline Policy - (from T&L and up to FGB – to go on Website) – *JM enquired about the steps for excluding a child as these had not been included in the policy.* CB stated that the separate Exclusion Policy gave all the necessary information. CB added that much had been altered in discussion with teachers to make the content more positive. The policy will be posted on the website as reviewed and was agreed by the GB. **(Action – CB to place the Positive Behaviour and Discipline Policy on the website.)**
- b. Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy – (Website) – *JM questioned whether under the reference to bullying if parents had been given the tackling bullying procedures information.* CB stated she believed this was in the pupil induction pack. **(Action – CB to check the information about combating bullying in school is given to all parents.)** *Governors also checked that staff signed the disclosure and followed the ten steps, which CB confirmed they did. CB will check the inclusion of the phrase “error bookmark” for Appendix 2 and amend as required. The GB ratified this policy with the agreed changes. (Action – CB to make changes to the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy as agreed in the meeting and place on the website.)*
- c. Ethnic Diversity/Race Relations Policy - (from Res. and up to FGB – on Website.) This policy had been reviewed by the Resources Committee and agreed, when page numbers had been added and p1 amended to include CB instead of SN. *HE sought clarification around the formal procedures for Senior Management and the GB, which it was agreed would be likely to follow the complaints procedure as agreed by the GB, based on the Babcock guidance. HE noted in final paragraph on p8 that a report might only be given by the GB to parents in the case of a racial incident occurring. MF questioned whether it was beneficial reporting there had been no racial incidents.* CB stated that if an incident was to occur the implications would be huge and it would be brought to the GB without fail. *HE also questioned the frequency of the terms “should be/should” instead of the stronger affirmation of “are”.* *Governors agreed with this alteration.* The policy was ratified with the agreed changes being

made by CB. **(Action – CB to amend the Ethnic Diversity/Race Relations Policy and place on the website.)**

All Governors unanimously ratified all the above policies: Proposed JB, seconded CW.

10. Matters brought forward at the Chair's discretion :

- a. Safeguarding governor - additional shadow for JM:** IH kindly agreed to take on this role; his support being particularly valued with the Safeguarding Audit taking place soon.
- b. The decision on whether to change to monthly meetings from January 2017:** Governors voted unanimously for the GB to move to monthly FGB Meetings and the termination of committee meetings for the T&L and Resources Committees. The Pay and Performance Committee Meetings will continue to meet and Committees will be drawn from the GB and Associates should a Hearing Committee be required. *IH raised a concern that Governors may not be able to attend all monthly meetings*, though SS observed that with the recent increase to two committee meetings per term, the requirement to attend four GB meetings was already the case for most Governors and some could have been attending as many as six per term. All Governors agreed that holding four monthly FGB meetings per term would increase the GB efficiency, ensure regular monitoring of key issues and areas of school life, whilst avoiding much of the duplication in workload for many Governors on Committees and for the Clerk. Lead roles would remain in place and Lead Profiles created in lieu of the Committee Terms of Reference. The GB agreed that this new structure would be reviewed after a year or sooner should major issues arise with the new process for meetings. SS stated that each meeting would have clear areas of priority and that the Chair and Clerk would be meeting to plan the new Annual Cycle and the updating of related documents. *JM noted the benefits of monthly meetings which she believed would put perspective into the programme of meetings and help the GB to own the vision for the school.* It was questioned whether all the meetings needed to be in the evening. SS will consider this and look at creating the bones of the agendas for each FGB meeting; with the focus of Governor visits resulting from this planning
- c. Agree 2 governors to collate a crib sheet containing information for Ofsted:** It was agreed this document would not be needed for the GB as much of this information would come from the work on the SEF. The working group is to meet on December 8th and useful information for the GB will be generated through this meeting.

11. Impact of meeting:

- The GB has improved its knowledge and understanding of RAISEonLine through the hands on accessing of information around pupil attainment at WHPS during group exercises.
- There is a growing understanding of governor responsibilities as the GB takes on advice from the Review of Governance.
- An awareness of the impact on teaching and learning when new pupils join WHPS classes from other schools or unauthorised leave of absence is taken by pupils.
- Information gained through the latest Budget Monitor and ensuing GB discussions have clarified GB queries and highlighted future budget areas that will need monitoring.
- There was much useful challenge by the GB of the HT report, which had been presented in a way that enabled Governors to raise questions and grow their understanding of the school.
- Governors are more aware of using time effectively in a meeting to focus on their role of monitoring strategically.
- The shadow for the Safeguarding Governor is in place, ensuring sufficient support is available for JM and succession planning is taken into account.

The meeting closed at 9.45 pm